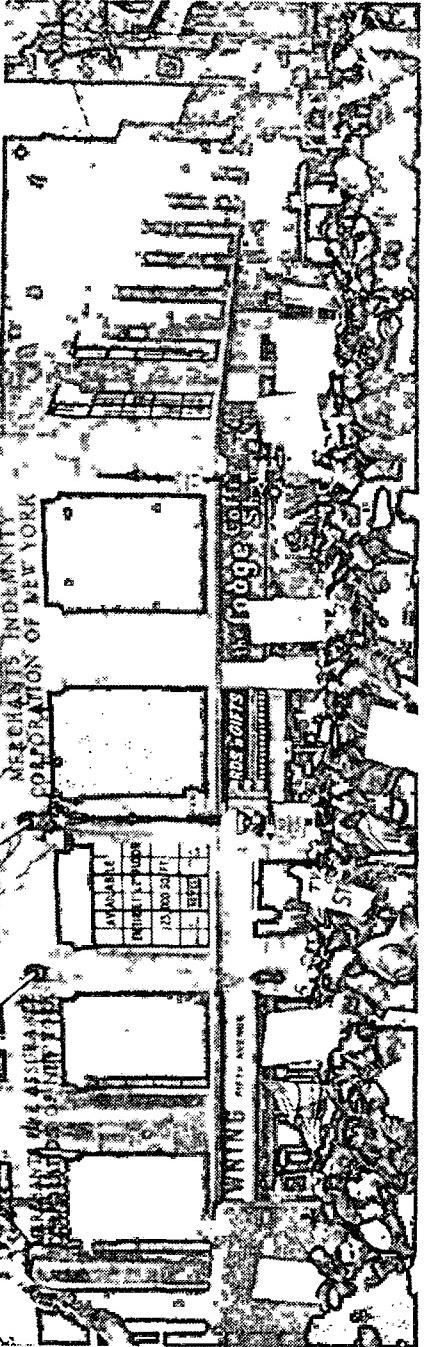


# THE AMERICAN



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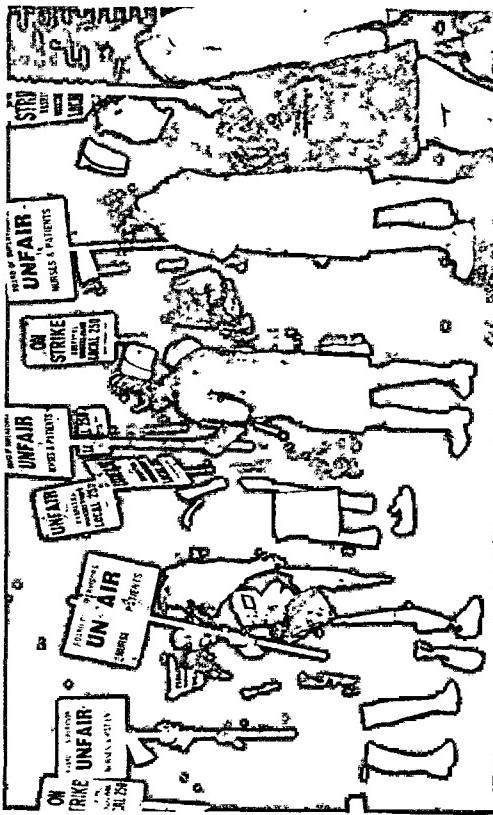
# WORKING CLASS

The picket lines at Ford's Pico Rivera plant near Los Angeles swelled suddenly with the arrival by ancient trucks of striking Mexican-American farmworkers. Led by Cesar Chavez, they traveled all night to cover the 200 miles from the struck grapefields around Delano.



# TRANSITION

ΑΙΓΑΙΟ ΜΟΔΟΥ



At the gates of San Francisco Geronimo Hoselton number one Board of Supervisors.



Financial office workers hurriedly served at "New York's finest" and seized doorway of Stock Exchange during March 1948 strike.

## INTRODUCTION

The essence of the socialist revolution is the establishment of the political, social and economic power of the working class. No elite, organization, or party, as crucial as the role of the revolutionary party is in the process of revolution, can substitute itself for the class power of the workers. It is this fact that Marx and Engels had in mind when they wrote that 'the emancipation of the working class must be the act of the working class itself'. Furthermore, since the working class is the majority class in modern society, a class composed of millions, it can only express its power through democratic institutions of its own creation. Even before any working class revolution had occurred, Marx and Engels foresaw this fact.

'We have seen above that the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of the ruling class, to establish democracy.'

Thus, proletarian democracy is not something to be 'evolved' or created after the seizure of power by a 'socialist' elite, it is part of the process of seizing power itself. Democratic institutions are not simply desirable, they are a necessity for the working class. Indeed, every great attempt by the working class to seize power has been accompanied by the creation of such institutions, most often in the form of workers councils. Obviously, such institutions do not result from abstract formulas or party directives, but from the consciousness of the working class, or at least its most advanced sections. Similarly, the seizure of power, the replacement of the old ruling class and its institutions by the working class through its institutions, can only result from the consciousness of the working class. It is for this reason that revolutionary socialists, from Marx through Lenin down to the present (as opposed to Stalinists and social democrats) have always defined the role of revolutionaries, and the revolutionary party, in terms of their relationship to working class consciousness. All attempts to bypass the consciousness of the working class have ended in utopian futility or the establishment of a new ruling class hostile to the interests, and the rule, of the working class itself.

The primary role of revolutionary organization, then, is to comprehend and advance the consciousness of the class through analysis, program and action. These tasks are not separate and distinct, but integral parts of the same process. Revolutionaries learn from and act with the working class at the same time they analyse and advance ideas of their own. Yet, today, the revolutionary movement and virtually all the tendencies within it are by-and-large isolated from the activities and consciousness of the working class. This situation is gradually changing as more and more radicals and revolutionaries enter the working class or engage in its struggles. Years of isolation, however, and the growing acceptance by some sections of the movement of the bankrupt (and anti-working class) notions of Stalinism require some introductory comments on the role of socialists in the working class.

Mass revolutionary struggles, let alone the seizure of power, are impossible without the acceptance and advocacy of socialist ideas and programs by significant sections of the working class. Since socialist ideas are not current, or even widely available, in the working class, the propagation of socialist analysis and program within the class is clearly a necessity. In very practical terms this means that socialist militants within the working class must be known as such and must openly present and argue for the socialist alternative in the context of struggle. The strategy, often held by Stalinists and social democrats past and present, of posing as simple trade union militants or aggressive liberals in order to win the confidence of the workers so that one's politics can be revealed later (usually much, much later) offers no solution to the problem of creating socialist consciousness. It is simply manipulation. The consciousness of the working class does not grow en masse in neatly defined stages. As with all social groups, it is extremely uneven at any time. There is, of course, no way to tell when some groups of workers are 'ready' for socialist politics except by trying to spread those politics throughout the class. Obviously, to do this effectively, revolutionaries must, in fact, be militants in today's struggle, but they must not limit themselves to such a role. Common sense should make it clear that the spouting of revolutionary slogans by those who are new to the working class and its struggles is not what is meant here. The point, simply put, is just that a revolutionary socialist who does not appear as such to those around him might as well not be a revolutionary socialist.

Consciousness, however, does not reach a revolutionary level, in any significant section of the working class, simply as a result of reading or conversations. Consciousness develops in and from struggle. The very reality of socialist ideas depends on the level and intensity of struggle and the experiences accrued from that struggle. Thus, it is crucial that the revolutionary, while being honest about his total politics, have something to say and do about that struggle long before it reaches revolutionary proportions. It is in this context that the concept of transitional program, discussed later in this paper, is relevant. Transitional program is not a reformist substitute for a revolutionary program but part of the process leading toward its fulfillment. Its formation is the result of the interplay between socialist analysis and the consciousness of the class at its current level. The essential purpose of transitional programs is to carry the struggles of today to a higher level and in the process of struggle to overcome the unevenness of consciousness. It is not so much a set of demands as a method of overcoming the problem of isolation from struggle, on the one hand, and opportunistic tail-ending of current consciousness, on the other hand.

It is not the purpose of this paper to propose the specifics of a transitional program or of the tactics appropriate to the period. Rather, it is an attempt to analyse and assess the current levels of working class struggles and consciousness and to begin the task of formulating the outlines of a strategy for the period. It goes without saying that a more detailed strategy requires our learning more from the working class itself.

For twenty years the American working class has been silent, a sleeping giant lulled to sleep by its own victories and the ability of American capitalism to expand and provide a gradually rising standard of living. The working class has had to struggle to realize these gains, but this struggle has been contained within the limits and rules established by the system. Furthermore, the struggles of the 1950s and early 1960s were essentially parochial in nature, limited to particular industries, shops or unions, virtually never taking on an overall class political character. Able to win real gains, the working class became fragmented and local in outlook. This fragmentation of consciousness reinforced the political conservatism of the class and therefore, the willingness of some workers to turn to reactionary and racist solutions to their problems. The only institutions of working class struggle in America, the trade unions, have followed and exacerbated this fragmentation by becoming bureaucratically ossified, politically reactionary, and institutionally integrated with the administration of industry. Once genuine if limited instruments of class struggle, the unions and their leaders have become parochial 'interest groups', not only incapable of inspiring their members, but often restricting struggle.

This conservatizing process rested on the ability of American capitalism to provide discernable improvements in the living standards of the majority of the working class. Since the mid-1960s, however, these conditions have been eroded and the system has been unable to raise real wages for the majority of workers or to prevent a drop in the living standards of black, spanish-speaking, and poor white workers. The mechanisms that have sustained the stability of the system, notably the permanent arms economy, have begun to backfire, even to the point of enhancing the contradictions they once served to suppress. The re-emergence of these contradictions, in somewhat new forms, has brought an accompanying growth in intensity of working class struggle. Whereas, ten years ago, workers struggled to gain improvements in their living and working standards, today workers must struggle even more militantly just to hold the line. Furthermore, the interpenetration of industry and the state that was required by the arms economy and the subsequent statification of the economy tend to give a more national and political focus to what were previously viewed as local issues. The enemies of the working class are more centralized and visible.

At the same time, the fragmentation of consciousness, the economic and racial stratification, and recent changes in the structure of the working class, have all combined to produce an extreme unevenness of consciousness. Lacking any readily adaptable institutions of struggle, this unevenness of consciousness poses serious problems for the growth of class conscious struggle in response to the instability of the system. In discussing the direction of struggle, it would be misleading to simply discuss the class as a whole until we understand the roots and nature of the fragmentation, stratification, and differentiation within the class.

## THE CHANGING STRUCTURE OF THE AMERICAN WORKING CLASS

The working class is composed of all those people who, divorced from the ownership or control of the means of production and forced to rely on the sale of their labor power (ability to work) for their livelihood, produce the great bulk of the total wealth of the nation. Numbering 60 million<sup>1</sup> or more in the active labor force, these workers and their families make up the vast majority of the population, perhaps 180 million people. This common condition is defined by their subordinate relationship to the means of production, i.e. by their subordination to capital and its social personification, the capitalist class. As the definition of the class as a whole derives from its position in production, so the structure of the class is defined by the structure of industry. Since the technique, products, and circulation mechanisms of the capitalist mode of production are always in flux, the structure of the working class must always change accordingly. Both the perimeter and the internal lines of division of the working class are always in a state of transition.\* In the past 25 years, in particular, the structure of the American working class has gone through important changes.

The best known of these changes is the growth of white collar occupations in proportion to the traditional blue collar, industrial proletariat. The absolute size of the industrial proletariat has increased somewhat since 1950, but this is due largely to the growth of arms production in general and to the Vietnam war in particular: the arms economy as a whole employs about 10% of the labor force.<sup>2</sup> As the figures in Table I show, the greatest increases in white collar employment have been among professional and technical and clerical workers. Service jobs have grown as well, but not so rapidly as white collar jobs.

\* The question of whether or not certain marginal groups are or are not workers at any given time is somewhat beside the point. It is more a question of direction and process and the manner in which these affect consciousness that is relevant to a Marxist analysis. The so-called precision of bourgeois sociology at drawing lines of definition, based on income, education, etc., is not really precision since it obscures the reality of transition. The statistics presented in this section are to be taken for the directions they point to rather than as precise numerical counts of various types of workers. -K.M.

*Table I: EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION, 1940-68 (in thousands)<sup>3</sup>*

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>1940</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1968</u>
Total	51,742	58,999	66,681	75,920
White collar total	16,082	21,601	28,726	35,551
<i>Professional and technical</i>	3,879	5,081	7,475	10,325
<i>Managers, officials</i>	3,770	5,155	7,067	7,776
<i>Clerical</i>	4,982	7,232	9,783	12,803
<i>Sales</i>	3,450	4,133	4,401	4,647
Blue collar total	20,597	24,266	24,211	27,524
<i>Craft and foremen</i>	6,203	8,350	8,560	10,015
<i>Operatives</i>	9,518	12,030	11,986	13,955
<i>Laborers</i>	4,875	3,885	3,665	3,533
Service	6,069	6,180	8,349	9,381
Farm	8,995	6,953	5,395	3,464

These changes are not, as is often stated, the result of a significant diminution in the production of goods at the expense of services. That is, these changes are not solely the result of a rise in consumption of services by the working class. As Tables II and III show, the proportion of service industries of both the Gross National Product and the labor force has risen only slightly since 1940. The most significant gains have been made in government employment. Virtually all of the increase in government jobs has been on the state and local level, and two-thirds of that has been in public education.<sup>4</sup>

*Table II: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT BY TYPE OF PRODUCT<sup>5</sup>*

	<u>1940</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1968</u>
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Goods Production	41.3	40.9	37.6	34.7
Services	45.6	44.9	46.5	47.4
Government	13.1	14.2	15.9	17.9

*Table III: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT BY TYPE OF PRODUCT<sup>6</sup>*

	<u>1940</u>	<u>1950</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1968</u>
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Goods Production	54.1	54.2	52.4	53.8
Services	35.1	33.0	36.4	36.8
Structures	10.8	12.8	11.2	9.4

The fastest growing element in government employment, therefore, is education, one of the primary factors in the re-production of labor. This fact, combined with the growth in professional and technical workers, the growth of skilled workers (included in craft and foremen), and the decline in the number of laborers, all point to changes in technology as the main force behind these shifts in occupational structure.

Driven by intensified international competition and a decrease in its share of world production - from 65% after World War II to about 35% today<sup>7</sup> - as well as by its need to accumulate capital, American capital has sought to increase its

production of surplus value by heightening the productivity of labor. Indeed, while employment in manufacturing rose only about 30% from 1950 to 1968, the manufacturing output index (1957-59=100) rose 120% in the same period. As a percentage of total business expenditures on plant and equipment, the share spent on manufacturing rose from 36.4% in 1950 to 41.5% in 1968.<sup>8</sup>

Productivity in manufacturing rose faster than that for the overall economy.<sup>9</sup> This leap in productivity accounts for the relatively small increases in the size of the industrial proletariat and to a lesser degree for the increase in professional and technical workers. This latter increase, along with that of clerical workers, however, is only partially explained by the expansion of production technology.

Technological innovation, in fact, does not necessarily mean a dramatic or even notable increase in skilled and professional workers. In industries such as auto, where even unskilled labor is expensive from a capitalist point of view, advances in technology may eliminate a significant number of unskilled workers. In general, however, the purpose of automation or other innovations is to lower labor costs. Thus, as one management periodical put it, the reason for investing in technology is "to replace the most costly unit of labor (the skilled workers) with automated equipment, rather than the low cost labor (the unskilled worker)."<sup>10</sup> Most of the serious studies of the actual effects of automation show that this is the case in practice. Such innovation reduces the entire labor force in relation to production without any absolute increase in technical or skilled personnel. Generally, skilled workers who retain their jobs find their job content diluted.<sup>11</sup> Such technical labor as is required does not compensate for the reduced cost of the rest of the labor force, and is not that much in any case.<sup>12</sup> The growth of professional and technical workers cannot be explained solely by the direct requirements of technology. About 23%-25% of this category are teachers, an occupation which is only indirectly related to technology. In 1966, only 32.8% of all scientists and engineers employed in private industry worked on production operations.<sup>13</sup> Much of the increase in this sort of employment stems from broader strategic needs of capital, on the one hand, and the arms sector, on the other.

The tendency of the rate of profit to fall, plus competition at home\* and abroad, force capital not only to reduce labor costs at any given point but to *plan* ways of reducing the costs of the means of production themselves and eliminate frictions in the process of circulation. It is the planning of technological innovation, product distribution, and business practices which consumes much of the energy of scientists and engineers, as well as other professional workers. Again, in 1966, 37.8% of all scientists and engineers in industry worked on research and development, while the remaining 29.4% worked in management, sales, service and other functions.<sup>14</sup> These same kinds of functions are performed by many clerical workers and professional groups such as accountants, market research workers, advertising, etc. A good deal of this type of work is associated with various attempts to offset the falling profit rate, with considerable success, and is quite removed from production itself. A fairly high proportion of the more technical work, particularly research and development, is directly tied in with the arms economy and the government. About 25% of all scientists and engineers working in industry worked on government contracts in 1966; in research and development the percentage was about 40%. Fully 70% of these scientists and engineers worked in five industries: electrical equipment, chemicals, aircraft and parts, machinery, and ordnance. All of these industries are the main receivers of defense contracts, three of them are also industries that produce means of production.<sup>15</sup> Thus, in addition to its relation to the arms economy, highly technical work plays an important role in reducing the relative cost of means of production.

Although not always directly related to production, much of the growth in technical and professional employment represents a process of proletarianization of previously independent or academic fields. Unlike the professionals of past decades, the post-war professional and technical worker sells his or her labor to an industrial capitalist, under conditions set by the capitalist. The growth of this phenomenon has been accompanied by an absolute and relative decline in the number of self-employed people: in non-agricultural work, from 6,070,000 in 1950 to 6,061,000 in 1965.<sup>16</sup> The degree of proletarianization varies from occupation to occupation: it is greater for those who work directly on technology (e.g. computer programmers and technicians) than for those doing purely scientific work, nonetheless, the process of proletarianization is moving ahead and the traditional middle class is receding. Given the high salary level and growing annual increment rate in such occupations, however, it is not likely that this group will abandon its 'middle class' consciousness for some time. Most likely, it will take a good deal of motion within the industrial proletariat to stimulate a transition to identification with the working class as a whole. The May 1968 events in France showed that professional and technical workers are capable of identifying with an active proletariat and of joining in the struggle for workers' control.<sup>18</sup> There is no evidence, however, to justify the notion, advanced by some of the theorists of the 'new working class', that these workers can play a leading role in the struggle of the class as a whole. Indeed, professional and technical workers have resisted numerous unionization attempts, by independent professional unions and by the IUE, UAW, and AFTE. Union membership among organizable engineers, scientists, and technicians is 2½%-3% of potential, and membership is mostly among the less skilled technicians. This is largely the result of a continuing identification with 'professionalism'.<sup>19</sup> The professional organizations such as the National Society of Professional Engineers will probably have predominant influence for some time to come.

\* One study shows that automation was considered by most firms in relation to the productivities and costs of labor and capital of competitive firms. Cf. Sutan and Prozaw, in *Labor: Readings in Major Problems*, p. 362.

Clerical workers have grown numerically at about the same rate as professional and technical workers. They compose more than 40% of the non-managerial white collar work force and have grown from 12.3% of the total work force in 1950 to 16.5% in 1968.<sup>20</sup> The overwhelming majority and nearly all of the new clerical workers since 1950 are women.<sup>21</sup> Like professional and technical workers, they are spread throughout all industries.<sup>22</sup> The primary functions of clerical workers are related to the increasingly complex, internal 'business' practices and mechanisms of industry. To a far greater degree than professional or technical workers, they are crowded into large 'pools', under supervision similar to that in production. Clerical work, because it is low paying and repetitive, does not represent the proletarianization of formerly middle class people so much as it is a channel for horizontal mobility within the working class and even more, a second source of income for working class families. In this sense it has served as a safety valve for working class discontent. The possibilities of both a continuation of the rapid expansion of this sector and of significant wage increases are, however, limited by the potential of automation. Automation is particularly applicable to clerical work and, as with production automation, tends to drastically displace the less skilled jobs without offering much potential for skill upgrading among those displaced.<sup>23</sup> At the very least, there is likely to be a decline in the growth rate of clerical work.

Next to technology, probably the most important mechanisms for sustaining the rate of profit in domestic private industry are those associated with increasing the speed of the circulation of commodities. Indeed, the profitability of technological innovation depends on the ability of industry to realize the value of expanded production through an expanded market or increased rate of circulation of commodities. The drive to more effectively exploit the market has affected numerous industries and occupations. One of the most important reflections of this process is the growth in the wholesale and retail trades. This growth is not an increase in the sales function *per se*, so much as in the total operation of distribution. Sales employment scarcely increased at all from 1950 to 1968, whereas total employment in trade increased by nearly 50% in the same period.<sup>24</sup> Most of the increase in trade employment is in clerical jobs and about three-quarters of all trade workers are in retail rather than in wholesale.<sup>25</sup> While retail trade is still characterized by relatively small units, the trend is toward concentration into larger units. From 1954 to 1963 a slightly decreasing number of establishments realized a 43% increase in sales. In the case of department stores, which account for 20%-25% of retail employment, establishments employing more than 100 workers accounted for about 85% of sales.<sup>26</sup> Wages in wholesale and retail trade are among the lowest of any industry. Average weekly earnings in wholesale and retail, as of April 1969, were \$86.40, over \$20 below the average for total private employment, \$36 below that for manufacturing, and no less than \$77 below construction.<sup>27</sup> As with clerical work in general, though to a lesser degree, there is a high concentration of women in trade, about 44%.<sup>28</sup> As an expanding source of employment, trade also represents a possible second income for many working class families and a channel for lateral and downward mobility within the class.

There is no doubt that the increase of real income that occurred from 1950 to 1965 did induce increased expenditure on services by workers and others. Employment in service industries (not the same as 'service producing' industries discussed earlier, which refers simply to all non-goods producing industries) nearly doubled from 1950 to 1968, from about 5.4 million to 10.4 million. As an occupational category, however, service workers grew only by a little more than 50% in the same period.<sup>29</sup> The answer to this discrepancy lies in an increase in clerical personnel in these industries due to modernization, on the one hand, and the absorption of a significant portion of professional workers into business related services, i.e. advertising, market research, and services related to planning and technology in general. Thus, a good deal of the growth of services is not the result of consumer spending, but of some of the business trends that were discussed earlier. This is further borne out by the fact that while services in general have continued to grow apace, the increase in service workers has slowed down. Whereas there were more than 2 million new service workers in the 1950s, there have been only about one million in the first eight years of the 1960s.<sup>30</sup> As a source of (low paying) jobs for black and women workers (blacks are about 20% of the total, women over 50%) service jobs offer only narrowing possibilities. As a source of upward mobility within the working class, primarily for the children of skilled workers, the expanding professional, semi-professional and technical jobs in service industries, as in production industry, still offer a way out of the industrial proletariat to some.

The fastest growing sector of the work force is state and local government — federal employment has not grown much since 1950. Nearly half of these state and local public workers are blue collar workers<sup>31</sup> who perform the same tasks, under similar conditions, as their brothers in private industry. A fairly large portion of these blue collar workers are union members, not only of the public employee unions but other industrial and craft unions as well (IBT, TWU, BSEIU, etc.). A large portion of the white collar labor force is composed of clerical workers. Yet two-thirds of the increase from 1961 to 1968 in state and local employment was in public education. Although this includes custodial and clerical workers, most (about 2 to 1) were teachers. This rapid increase in the number of teachers explains a significant portion of the growth of professional occupations, perhaps 25%. The increased expenditure by government on education, particularly secondary and higher education, is related to changes in the requirements of the reproduction of labor, i.e. the process of shaping new generations of workers in accordance with the needs of industry. To some degree the changes in education that have taken place since 1950 represent a need for a generally higher level of skill. All of the figures<sup>32</sup> indicate, however, the increased emphasis on education is not so much a matter of training in specific skills as it is an attempt to increase the mobility of labor. That is, the object of education seems to be to create a labor force that can switch to different, though not necessarily higher, skills or jobs. In short, education is being increased to create a labor force that can follow the changes in technology described earlier.

Education composes nearly 50% of total state and local employment. Of the other types of public employment, perhaps three-fourths are blue collar in nature.<sup>33</sup> There have been increases in the professional personnel associated with various welfare and anti-poverty programs, but these are a small proportion of total public employment. The number of publicly employed social workers, for example, rose rapidly from 74,000 in 1950 to 125,000 in 1965,<sup>34</sup> but still totalled only an insignificant portion of public employment. Similarly, the number of scientists and engineers working for the government (at all levels) rose from 106,000 in 1950 to 220,000 in 1965,<sup>35</sup> a rapid increase but still a small number. To some degree professional jobs with government represent a source of upward mobility. Naturally, this is particularly the case with teaching. One study of teachers indicates a significant increase in the proportion of male teachers with blue collar family backgrounds since the end of World War II.<sup>36</sup> This fact, along with the financial crisis of the cities, has probably helped spur the drive toward unionization among teachers and other professional groups. Professional salaries in government generally lag behind those in private industry and are often comparable to blue collar wages in basic industry. In 1966, for example, the average teacher made \$500 a year less than the average steelworkers and in 1965 20% of all teachers 'moonlighted'.<sup>37</sup>

In overall terms, these occupational trends show a general tendency toward economic and social downgrading, though with significant counter-tendencies. Those rapidly expanding job categories with a large numerical volume, notably clerical and service jobs, are generally low paying. On the other hand, much of the expansion in professional and technical jobs reflects a social process toward the proletarianization of previously middle class, independent professions. Such up-grading as does occur is probably largely by the children of skilled workers who move into professional or government jobs — making room for the children of unskilled workers (white) to become skilled, to some extent. The continuing potential for upward mobility, however, is limited by the decrease in new investment required by more efficient technology. The annual growth rate of expenditure of research and development, for example, has fallen, from about 12% in the early 1950s to 5% in 1967 — and even that rate has been sustained by increased government spending in the field, which is itself limited.<sup>38</sup> The overall tendency toward economic downgrading of the working class as a whole shows up even more clearly in an industrial breakdown of employment, per cent change, and wages. From Table IV it is easy to see that the fastest growing areas of employment pay below the level of manufacturing, a level won by years of union struggle.

Table IV: WORK FORCE (excluding managers, supervisors, etc.) BY INDUSTRY, 1950 TO 1968 (in '000s)<sup>39</sup>

Industry	1950	1968	% change	Average weekly earnings, 4/68
Mining	766	529	- 32.2	\$142.62
Construction	1,983	2,759	+ 39.1	\$163.81
Manufacturing	12,900	16,579	28.8	\$122.51
Transportation	3,429	3,687	7.4	\$144.11
Trade	7,978	11,957	49.7	\$ 86.40
Financial, etc.	1,272	2,840	123.2	\$102.12
Service	4,575	8,892	94.5	\$ 90.00
Government	4,872	9,879	102.7	not available
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>37,775</b>	<b>57,122</b>	<b>51.1</b>	<b>\$107.73</b>

As most of these expanding industries are poorly unionized, and given the ossification of the unions today don't show much hope of being unionized, there is no reason to expect them to show wage increases great enough to catch up with manufacturing. The only major exception to this is government employment and here a severe limit on continued rapid growth is closing in as the financial crisis of the cities deepens.

## CONSCIOUSNESS AND POTENTIAL OF WHITE COLLAR WORKERS

The increase in the number of proportion of working class jobs only indirectly or tangentially related to production itself has taken place over a period of 25 years. If the problem of a consciousness lag has always been at work as new sections of the population were proletarianized, it is an even greater problem with white collar workers. Whereas, for example, the growth of mass production industry from World War I to the late 1930s brought former craftsmen and farmers into essentially the same situation, the technological advances from 1945 to today have created scores of new, distinct situations on the periphery of mass industry. The previous section indicated this diversity: ranging from the highly technical to the most repetitive clerical work. Although the creation of these new jobs, or the expansion of old ones, has been accompanied and affected through an increased concentration in the work place for white collar workers, it is by no means on the scale that took place in production. Furthermore, even though the process of proletarianization may have meant the experience of the lessening of independent status for some this does not necessarily involve a drop in income

or a change in life style, etc. The fact that many of these white collar workers have been so much in demand has meant that they have been able to get salary increases at an increasing rate. This is true for virtually all professional and technical categories and even for clerks.<sup>40</sup> By and large this has been accomplished without unionization or struggle. Even those increases, of course, are not sufficient to keep up with taxes and inflation, but the effects of this are somewhat mitigated by the high level of professional salaries, on the one hand, and by the fact that many clerical incomes are viewed as a family's second income, on the other.

These facts, combined with the traditional social distance between white collar and blue collar workers, have contributed to the failure of white collar workers to respond to their changing situation through collective action. White collar unionism is as weak today as it was a decade ago. As a percent of total union membership or of white collar employment, union membership among white collar workers has remained stable. It has not even grown significantly in numerical terms.

*Table V: WHITE COLLAR UNION MEMBERSHIP, 1956-66 (in thousands)<sup>41</sup>*

	Total union membership	White collar members	% total union membership	% of white collar force
1956	17,980	2,417	13.4	12.8
1966	18,391	2,693	14.6	10.5

These gains that have been made were made mostly in government employment and that is numerically rather small. AFSCME, for example, has about 300,000 members, and of those only about a third are white collar workers. The AFT has grown rapidly since the mid-1950s, but still has only about 125,000 members.<sup>42</sup> Strike activity among government workers is minuscule. In the most active year before 1965, workers on strike as a percentage of all government workers was only 0.3%.<sup>43</sup> In qualitative terms, government professional employees have conducted some very militant union struggles. In general, however, the hopes held by some a couple of years ago that the AFT and the independent welfare workers unions would spark a revival of militant unionism have collapsed. The AFT nationally has been content to rest on the liberal positions it developed in the early 1960s, while the situation has passed them by, and has even come to the point of discussing merger with its old rival, the NEA. Virtually all of the independent welfare unions have been defeated and isolated. Most of them have merged with more conservative AFL-CIO unions, in some cases the same ones they split from in the first place. Perhaps even more significant, is the fact that in many areas and cities, both the teachers and welfare workers unions have come into conflict with the black community. In all cases, the radical notion of forging an alliance with recipient or parent groups has faded from all but the rhetoric. In New York, the UFT has conducted a strike directed against the black community. The facile ability of various city governments to direct the struggles of certain professional workers against other sections of the working class, particularly blacks, points to a peculiarity in the consciousness of many professional workers (which is not to deny the importance of racism in such a situation).

Many of the professional and semi-professional jobs in public employment are related to the oppressive functions of the state. This is certainly true of welfare workers, employment workers of various kinds, and even of teachers. Although they are themselves subject to weighty authority from the top, these workers nonetheless have a good deal of power over those they are supposed to serve. This fact is two-edged. Often the oppressive nature of the work, as opposed to the official conception of the job as a service, leads to rebellion among these workers. This was certainly the case in the early years of the welfare workers unions — around 1965. At the same time, the objective nature of the work separates them from other sections of the working class — not just blacks or poor people, but all workers who must deal with state bureaucracies such as Unemployment Insurance, Workman's Compensation, etc. This fact is often reinforced by a rather arbitrary educational requirement in order to get the job. To a great degree, even with teachers, the requirement of a college degree is more a matter of enforcing social distance than of any skill requirement. All of this has had a distorting effect on consciousness beyond that of mere differences in income, etc.

It seems unlikely, given the state of the unions and the general consciousness of white collar workers, that unionization will play much of a role in the development of consciousness among white collar workers — either as a cause or a reflection. Given the diversity and range of jobs and the lag in consciousness that still exists, it seems more likely that any major breakthrough among white collar workers will only occur in the context of a general upheaval in industry. That is, the consciousness of white collar workers is more likely to develop in response to overall social crisis than to the specifics of the job, around which unions are often built. This portends a leap in consciousness rather than its gradual development.

The conditions that might stimulate such a leap are in formation. Some of them are part of the process of proletarianization, already discussed — these are but the necessary conditions. Perhaps the sufficient conditions lie in the growing crisis of capitalism that is affecting the working class as a whole. Taxes and inflation, endemic to the crisis, affect all sections of the working class. Furthermore, although white collar workers have been receiving continuous wage increases, they do not have any organized way of fighting to keep these increases at least to the level of inflation. It is significant that the wage increases of industrial workers under union contracts have been greater in recent years than those of professionals,<sup>44</sup> thus narrowing the differentials. As inflation continues, what is more, the second family income becomes more important. All of this must be seen in the context of advancing technology. Even assuming a fall in the rate of innovation, many

clerical jobs will be displaced. Both the possibilities for second incomes and job prospects for young workers will narrow. The 'macro-economic' nature of these problems means a great tendency toward unification of class consciousness, that is, a reversal of the general fragmentation that has existed for the past twenty years and an overcoming of much that has separated white collar from industrial workers.\*

## INDUSTRIAL WORKERS AND THE UNIONS TO THE MID-1960s

In the years from 1950 to 1968, the industrial working class grew at a much slower rate than other sections of the working class. The number of workers in manufacturing grew 28.8%, those in transportation only 7.4%, and the number of miners actually decreased by 32.2% (see Table IV). This, of course, was the result of technology and increased productivity. If the number of manufacturing workers grew by only 28.8%, the output of manufacturing grew by 91%.<sup>45</sup> The continuing advance of productivity allowed industrial workers, indeed all workers, to make significant wage gains. From 1950 to 1965 average weekly earnings in manufacturing increased \$58.32 to \$107.53, an increase of 84%, while the consumer price index rose by only 31% for the same period.<sup>46</sup> This increased standard of living meant that workers could well afford to let the union leaders conduct union affairs as they saw fit. At the same time, it meant that the union leaders had to give capital a free hand in introducing new technology, or simply sweating higher production rates out of the workers. Eventually this contradiction brought the union leaders in conflict with the rank and file. Nonetheless, the long term of expansion of living standards created considerable apathy among industrial workers, and what is more important, the separation of political consciousness from industrial consciousness.

This expansion in living standards was not won without struggles. With the end of the no-strike pledge in 1945, strikes began to break out throughout industry. This strike wave reached its height in 1946 when nearly five million strikers cost industry an unprecedented 116 million man-hours. This high figure was due primarily to the 113-day auto strike of 1946. This strike was the first, and the last, to demand a large wage increase, 19½ cents an hour, with no price increase by the auto manufacturers. The steel workers, after a 30-day strike, settled before auto, however, and undermined its price control demands. In the end, auto and all the other major industries settled for 18½ cents, with the understanding that the corporations had the right to offset wage increases with price increases. The settlements of 1946 were important in that they firmly established the practice of 'pattern' bargaining, whereby other industries follow auto or steel in the terms of their agreements, and the practice of companies raising prices after a wage increase.<sup>48</sup> The strikes of 1946 had been over wages and had re-established the power of the unions after the restrictions of the war. The period from 1947 to the mid-1950s continued the 'patterns' set in 1946, but added a new dimension to the practices of industrial unionism.

In the first place, the strikes up to 1955 were almost universally official union actions, conducted within the limits of the law. At this time, the old CIO leaders, Lewis and Murray, and the younger leaders, such as Reuther and Carey, were willing to fight fairly aggressively for certain types of gains. In fact, strike activity rose during the Korean war, up to 1953<sup>49</sup> and in February 1951 the CIO men actually bolted from Truman's Wage Stabilization Board, although they returned rather meekly in April.<sup>50</sup> What is most significant about the period up to 1955, however, is what these union leaders were bargaining for. Whereas in the 1930s the union movement had turned to the government to gain security for their members, in the period after 1946, the unions increasingly tried to win this sort of protection through the union contract. The leading demands of the Mine Workers, Auto Workers, Steel Workers and other industrial unions, were for welfare and pension funds, health and accident benefits, cost of living clauses, and finally in 1955 for Supplementary Unemployment Benefits (won first in auto and then in steel). To a great degree these demands were an attempt to offset some of the effects of automation without trying to control it.<sup>51</sup> At the same time, the attempt to win social security through the union contract represented a retreat from politics as a means of social struggle. Labor, of course, was politically active during this period, but virtually all of labor's big political drives up to 1960 were defensive actions concerned with staving off openly anti-labor legislation: first Taft-Hartley, then state right to work laws in the mid-1950s and finally Landrum-Griffin in 1958-59 (the Labor-Management Relations Act). Furthermore, as the Democrats, who were out of power, were willing to fight most of the extreme abuses of these laws, very little initiative or independence was required of labor. Thus the struggles which won the working class the gains of the 1950s were conceived of and led by the labor leadership without going beyond legal or 'acceptable' practices and without mass initiative by the workers themselves. The relative success in bargaining, the de-politicization of the unions, and above all the fading of mass initiative by the workers in this period allowed certain old trends to reassert themselves and create a new situation for the workers and their unions.

The birth of the CIO was made possible by a massive upheaval in the new mass production industries that began in the early 1930s. The CIO and its various unions and organizing committees did little more than finance and coordinate this rebellion.<sup>52</sup> To a certain degree, the CIO as an organization, but not the workers' rebellion, was born of a political deal: first Section 7A of NRA and then the Wagner Act, in return for which the CIO leadership offered its political support to Roosevelt and the Democratic Party. Within the ranks, the fight for a labor party was not defeated totally until the late

\* The fact that many of these white collar workers are college graduates should not be lost on the student movement. A 'working class orientation' by students should certainly include programs directed at students destined for working class jobs. Such a program will have to deal with the nature of these jobs, of work under capitalism, with concepts of control, and with macro-economic questions as well as with war and racism, which are generally handled as moral questions instead of class questions.

1940s. But the integration of the labor leaders in the Democratic Party grew from an 'alliance' with the Democrats to a permanent institutional arrangement that has lasted to the present. This fact, by itself, has contributed to the continual rightward movement of the union leadership. Equally important, however, are the consequences of the initial victories won by this political alliance.

Labor legislation has proved itself a two-edged sword. While the Wagner Act gave the unions the legal right to organize, it also prescribed the manner in which labor is expected to behave. The incredible web of labor legislation that has grown up in the thirty years since the Wagner Act has expanded, without an expansion of labor's 'rights'. From a guarantee of basic rights, labor legislation has turned into a means of state reinforcement for industrial stability and corporation planning. It is well known, for example, that the primary criteria for NLRB decisions regarding representation, certification and bargaining units are based on considerations of industrial stability.<sup>53</sup> In spite of the pretensions of Landrum-Griffin, labor legislation and NLRB practice have tended to reinforce the structural bureaucratization of the unions by placing real bargaining power in the hands of the central union leadership. This, of course, is only a reflection of the needs and trends of industry itself, but it is important in that it adds the power of the state to the process. Thus, even in the absence of formal state planning or wage control bodies, collective bargaining in America has taken on many of the characteristics of statified, tri-partite bargaining.

The labor contract itself is an institutional part of this corporate planning. From capital's point of view, the long term labor contract is an invaluable aid in projecting labor costs, the most unpredictable of all costs.<sup>54</sup> For the labor bureaucrat, the long term contract simplifies administration of the union apparatus. Thus, by mutual agreement, labor contracts have steadily grown in length. Whereas in the '40s most industrial contracts were of one year duration, now most of them are three years in length, and some even four or five years.<sup>55</sup> Obviously, in a period of rapid technical change (and, later, inflation) such long term contracts tend to work in favor of the corporation rather than the worker, particularly since the weight of court and NLRB decisions dictate against bargaining in areas regarded as management's prerogative, such as the introduction of technology or other changes in the work process.<sup>56</sup> The labor contract, even where it does offer real protection for the worker, has not only proscribed the scope and timing of the class struggle, to a certain degree at least, but has forced the union apparatus to become an instrument of administration over the workers, as well as one of struggle. Thus, virtually all levels of union leadership, from the international to the shop steward or committeeman, are cast in the role of peace-keeper. Rebellion against this role, which does occur, usually takes on the character of a struggle against the international union leadership as well as management — and indirectly the state. As this institutional set-up is to the convenience of the international bureaucracy, the top level of union leadership has continuously enforced the contract and willingly bargained even longer ones. The process of enforcing long term, nation-wide contracts is itself a source of the structural bureaucratization of the industrial unions. To a certain degree the increased power of the international leadership grew out of the need to meet industry on its own terms, i.e. on the basis of concentrated, centralized national power. The nearly total divorce of the international leadership from the control of the membership, however, lay in the structural changes that took place during the period of low membership participation from 1950 to 1955. These changes include the lengthening of the period between international conventions, increases in appointed positions (particularly in those unions with a regional structure), the introduction of more difficult criteria for holding international office, and the growth of power of the staff and top leaders over the financial resources of the union. By the middle of the 1950s it was virtually impossible for anything less than a massive upheaval to displace the international leadership. Given this bureaucratic structure, the national contract became a source of power in itself, in that the international leadership had the power to decide which issues to push and which groups to placate. The skilled tactical use of the contract has, in fact, been a means of fragmenting rank and file rebellion by making concessions to one or another group of workers - old, young, skilled, production line, etc. - and playing them off against one another.

The general strategy of the industrial union bureaucracy since the early 1950s has been to emphasize wages and benefits increases (with growing emphasis on benefits) and ignore working conditions. This has been perfectly acceptable to capital since it has meant that they could increase productivity, ahead of wage increases, without interference from the unions. The United Mine Workers, under John L. Lewis, had capitulated to automation in the '40s, which forced tens of thousands out of the union and generally caused a disastrous cutback in working conditions.<sup>57</sup> Reuther and the UAW generally allowed automation without a fight, and more particularly, in 1955, allowed Chrysler and Ford to lower their work standards to the level of GM, lowest in the industry.<sup>58</sup> Following auto, other industries enforced speed-up and the deterioration of working conditions with the cooperation of the union. This tendency reached its formal stage in the early '60s with the ILWU-PMA 'mechanization agreement', the introduction of oxygen furnaces in steel, and the formation of joint management-labor committees to discuss (expedite) technical innovation. Even before this, however, the deterioration of working conditions in industry was general. This strategy of basing the national contract on wages and benefits and neglecting, or contributing to the worsening of working conditions, determined much of the rank and file revolt that finally broke out from 1955 on.

The ability of the unions to win increases in real wages, up to 1965, through the contract, while allowing working conditions to get worse, meant that much of the attention of rank and file militants turned from the national contract per se to the local shop, where the conditions were felt. The rebellion in the UAW, for instance, has almost always taken the form of wildcats in opposition to the contracts' failure to resolve working conditions. This was the case in 1955, 1958, and 1961. In 1964, Reuther made the wildcats official, but still did nothing about the conditions. In 1967, he actually

sanctioned local strikes before the fact. The strikes took place and the longest of them did not return to work until nearly seven months after the national contract was signed. Nonetheless, no solid gains in working conditions were made.<sup>59</sup> Similarly, though less dramatic and consistent developments have taken place in other major industries. In the electrical industry workers have resisted the imposition of 'measured day work', a system for speeding up production by docking workers who don't produce a certain amount each day. This struggle was important in the ousting of James B. Carey in 1964, the big GE strike of 1967, and reports by GE management of a growth in 'interim plant strikes'.<sup>60</sup> In general, there has been a growing trend since the mid-1950s for workers to reject the national contract as a result of its failure to deal with working conditions. In 1967, the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service reported that 14% of all the contracts they dealt with were rejected at least once by union members.<sup>61</sup> In fact, on the basis of this growing division between the workers and the union bureaucracy, some bourgeois econometricians have gone so far as to construct a 'model' for bargaining based on three parties, instead of the traditional two, the new third party being the union rank and file.<sup>62</sup> The outstanding characteristic of the growth of this rank and file rebellion, however, is its primarily local nature.

There have been attempts to build national rank and file rebellions or organizations in various industries. These national movements, however, differ sharply from past intra-union struggles in that they have been universally apolitical. In general, they have been concerned with single issues or with reforming the bureaucratized structure of the union. There is no doubt that the underlying causes of these rebellions have been economic or working conditions. What is significant, however, is the fact that these organizations did not express their discontent in political or even economic terms. This was a sharp departure from the old factional and caucus fights in the CIO, which were highly political. Whereas in the '30s and '40s caucuses were organization around the idea of a labor party, for or against a no-strike pledge to the government, or at least around the national bargaining program of the union, in the 1950s and early '60s, caucuses emphasized union democracy, virtually as an end in itself, dues, or the personalities of union leaders. The first, and one of the largest of the national rank and file rebellions was the Dues Protest Committee in the Steel Workers Union. Initiated around 1955 by local leaders in the Pittsburgh area, the DPC candidate made a strong showing against McDonald in 1956. Although it was smashed by 1958, the DPC undoubtedly contributed to the willingness of McDonald to conduct the long strike of 1959. The concerns of the DPC went beyond opposition to dues increases, but, nonetheless, as a movement it failed to develop a real program.<sup>63</sup> More recently, among the skilled workers in auto, the Dollar an Hour Now movement built its short life on the single issue of a dollar an hour increase for skilled trades workers. Interestingly, its rival, the International Society of Skilled Trades, is one of the few large workers movements to take on a political cast, and its was right-wing.<sup>64</sup> More typical of the organized revolts of the early 1960s were the various reform caucuses in unions such as the Painters', the National Maritime Union, the Paper Workers.<sup>65</sup> These caucuses, along with scores of similar caucuses on a more local level, have all centered their attacks on issues such as corruption or lack of democracy rather than drawing political conclusions. In most cases, they have even failed to build a solid mass following among the workers in their industries. This is not to say that these struggles were not important or that they did not raise important issues. In all cases, these rank and file movements have represented the workers' drive to gain control over their jobs and lives. Often the struggle has led these groups to go beyond the original, narrow concerns around which they were organized. Nevertheless, they have seldom raised issues beyond the limits of their own union, and never put forward political programs for struggle. This kind of apolitical consciousness is partly a result of labor's withdrawal from politics, as a positive expression of struggle, and partly a result of the way the ruling class defined issues during the 1950s. The big issues of the era, after all, were the Cold War, contributed to by the CIO leaders when they expelled eleven unions for 'Communist domination' in the early '50s, the prosperity, and particularly as regards the unions, corruption and gangsterism in the unions. Direct government intervention in strikes was rare under Eisenhower and really only began in 1962 when Kennedy sent Goldberg to make sure the steel workers didn't repeat the strike of 1959. At that time, however, the steelworkers were not about to go for another long strike and the intervention went unnoticed.<sup>66</sup> Consistent government intervention did not begin until around 1965 - in steel and later in the 1966 Airlines Mechanics strike<sup>67</sup> - and then was rather selective. Johnson, for political reasons no doubt, kept his hands off the auto negotiations in 1964 and 1967. A breakthrough in the fragmented, apolitical consciousness of most industrial workers will take more than intermittent government intervention. Developments since 1965-66, however, point to the formation of conditions that may spark such a breakthrough.

## THE GROWING INSTABILITY OF AMERICAN CAPITALISM

The ability of capitalism to expand, and thereby provide an expanding standard of living for the working class, depends on its ability to realize a growing mass of profits for reinvestment. If the rate of profit falls, the expansion of the economy must slow down more or less proportionately. The tendency of the rate of profit to fall, however, is endemic to the very process of capitalist expansion. Competition, particularly on the world market, forces even the greatest of corporations to intensify their exploitation of labor. In general, post-war capitalism has done this by increasing the relative exploitation of labor through a vast expansion of its productivity. To some extent, this increase in productivity has simply been sweated out of labor through the speed-up and other means of intensifying labor. For the most part, however, this has been accomplished by a large increase in the ratio of fixed capital to labor and subsequent advances in technology. Indeed, from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s, the investment in plant and equipment per employee nearly doubled, from \$5400 to \$10,100.<sup>68</sup> This growth in the ratio of capital to labor, i.e. in the organic composition of capital, however, is what causes the rate of profit (though not its amount) to fall, unless total output in-

creases rapidly. This, in fact, has been the case. As mentioned in the last section, manufacturing output rose by 91% from 1950 to 1968. Furthermore, there have been other compensating factors. The prices of some important means of production have risen at a slower rate than consumer products, and the wholesale price index of electrical machinery and equipment actually fell after 1960.<sup>69</sup> The increased use of cheaper Japanese produced machine tools has also helped to keep the costs of fixed capital down. In general, as Table VI shows, American capital has succeeded in maintaining a fairly stable rate of profit.

Table VI: TOTAL CORPORATE PROFITS BEFORE TAXES AND NET WORKING CAPITAL (in \$ billions)<sup>70</sup>

Year	Pre-tax Profits	Net Working Capital	Profit Rate
1950	40.0	81.6	49.0%
1951	41.2	86.5	47.6%
1952	35.9	90.1	39.8%
1953	37.0	91.8	40.3%
1954	33.2	95.0	34.9%
1955	44.9	102.9	43.6%
1956	44.7	107.4	41.6%
1957	43.2	111.6	38.7%
1958	34.7	118.7	31.5%
1959	47.7	124.2	38.4%
1960	44.3	128.6	34.4%
1961	50.3	148.8	33.8%
1962	55.4	155.6	35.6%
1963	59.4	163.5	36.3%
1964	66.8	170.0	39.3%
1965	77.8	180.1	43.2%
1966	85.6	189.4	45.2%
1967	81.6	200.1	40.8%

This has only been possible, however, by creating a balance of payments crisis on the international level and by vast state intervention in the domestic economy. That *tendency* of the profit rate to fall is still a real pressure on capitalists is attested to by the frequent and regular complaint by the 'business community' of a profit squeeze. This was particularly true in 1967-68.<sup>71</sup>

For technological advances to pay, the capitalist must be able to realize the value of expanded production by selling all his products, either at home or abroad. But the growth in domestic consumer spending, including that subsidized by various government welfare programs, could not have absorbed all of the increased production from 1950 on to today — certainly it cannot explain the growth in proportion of heavy durable goods. As a proportion of GNP, consumer spending fell slightly from 66% in 1950 to 61% in 1965. Furthermore, the biggest growth in volume of consumer spending was for services, with durable goods accounting for only 15% of consumer purchases in 1965.<sup>72</sup>

Industry's rather extensive attempts to exploit the domestic consumer market more effectively have, at best, only alleviated their problems. If industry had to rely solely on the expansion of the private domestic market, America would already be in the midst of a crisis of overproduction. The fact that such a crisis has not occurred, though the forces leading in that direction remain operative, can only be explained by the expanding role of the state as a purchaser of finished products. The limits of the domestic market have, of course, spurred the flow of capital abroad, particularly to Europe, a fact which has caused and exacerbated the balance of payments crisis. In the realm of exports, however, it has been necessary for the state to become a direct purchaser through AID. Since 1959, aid to foreign countries has been 'tied' by treaty to purchases in the US, meaning, in effect, that AID simply pays the corporations directly for these purchases. Whereas in 1959, 47% of AID purchases were made in the US, by 1965 it was up to 92%. This direct subsidy of export trade accounts for only 4.3% of total exports, but for certain important industries, notably steel, it is 25% or higher.<sup>73</sup> Yet, foreign trade cannot solve the problem, for it is precisely in the world market where competition is the greatest and the urge to increase the organic composition of capital is strongest. Foreign trade is limited as a solution to the problem of falling profit rates by the fact that it is also a cause of the problem. Far more important than foreign trade, subsidized or not, is the Federal defense budget, the basis of the permanent arms economy.

The defense budget has soared from \$13 billion in 1950 to more than \$80 billion in 1968. Each year, slightly more than half of this budget is paid directly to American corporations for research and development, various items needed by the armed forces, and, above all, for military hardware. In 1967, for example, the Department of Defence 'procured' nearly \$40 billion worth of goods from American firms (not including \$3 billion for work done by US firms outside the US, such as construction in Vietnam by RMK).<sup>74</sup> This was about twice as much as was spent for the same purpose in 1960. No doubt this huge annual outlay for war goods began as a political decision, i.e. as a result of the political side of imperialism. Nonetheless, the arms budget had long since become an integral part of the infrastructure of American capitalism. From the point of view of the capitalist class, this permanent arms economy has the dual advantage of being an ever-expanding 'market' for goods that in no way compete with ordinary commodities and, at the same time, an outlet for continuing capital accumulation through the destruction of capital. Defense purchases are, of course, outside the regular private market, but they do serve as an outlet for increased output resulting from advances in productivity. Since none of these products re-enter the process of production, arms being the ultimate in waste production, they do not add to accumulation. In this sense, arms production is somewhat analogous to Marx's Department III (luxuries) in the circulation of capital, which absorbed capital, at a profit, without contributing to the falling rate of profit, since it does not add to the overall organic composition of capital.<sup>75</sup> At the same time, since a large portion of defense purchases occur in capital-producing industries, or in industries that rely heavily on capital goods, arms production tends to have a stabilizing effect on investment.<sup>76</sup> There can be little doubt that, for all these reasons, defense spending stabilized American capitalism for the fifteen years from 1950 to 1965 and allowed for a fair degree of prosperity.

The very facts which have sustained stability, however, tend to become de-stabilizing factors. The money for arms purchases and arms profits must come from previous production through taxes. In a sense, they are like 'transfer payments', such as welfare.<sup>77</sup> In so far as the money comes from taxes on business, the profits of defense production are indeed just transfer payments from the surplus value of industry in general, i.e. within the capitalist class. Since a portion of total expenditure on arms production goes to wages, this would mean some gains for the working class, as was the case in the 1950s. This, however, means a loss to the capitalist class. For this reason, the 'business community' and their friends in government (i.e. government) have labored since the early 1950s to shift the burden of taxes onto the working class. This has been done by various tax credits and deductions for business and by increases in personal income taxes. The net result is that the proportion of Federal receipts from income taxes has risen from about 39% in 1950 to 46% in 1968.\* Furthermore, since it is well known that the rich, via numerous 'loopholes', pay about the same rate as middle income workers,<sup>79</sup> and as there are relatively few of them, the overwhelming bulk of personal income taxes come from the working class. In practice the workers have always paid a large share of the defense budget; now they are paying an even larger share. But it doesn't stop here.

As a matter of policy, the Department of Defense makes sure that the same 100 large corporations (they are among the top 300) receive about 75% of defense procurement each year.<sup>80</sup> This policy re-enforces the monopoly structure of American capitalism. As monopolistic, or even oligopolistic, firms, these corporations are able to pass on the cost of taxes to the public by raising prices. This is true with consumer goods as well as the defense products themselves, the costs of which soar each year. Thus, on the one hand, the costs of corporate taxes are passed onto the public and, on the other, inflation becomes rampant and permanent. Given the high degree of monopolization within the American economy, attempts by the government to slow down inflation by increasing taxes are futile. Thus in the past four years the United States has seen a simultaneous spiraling of taxes and prices. The policies and mechanisms that stabilized capitalism from 1950 to 1965 have become sources of instability. The key, of course, is the unusually rapid increase in war spending required by the Vietnam War. The 'special' assessments for Vietnam leaped from \$103 million in 1965 to \$25 billion in 1968.<sup>81</sup> Such a rapid increase, with no real diminution of regular arms spending, was bound to set off inflation and cause an increase in taxes as well. Once this increase has been made, however, it cannot simply be abandoned — not without a recession. Thus even before anyone in power had seriously considered even so much as a cutback in the Vietnam War, the President (Johnson, followed by Nixon) has proposed a budgetary de-emphasis on Vietnam and an increased emphasis on long term 'major hardware programs'.<sup>82</sup> Under these circumstances, the taxes and inflation must continue.

In the final analysis, profits, or more correctly surplus value, can only be increased or sustained at the expense of wages. Technology, intensification of labor through speed-up and over-work, inflation and taxes are all techniques for accomplishing this end, i.e. for redistributing income upward. In the 1950s technology or speed-up affected different groups of workers at different times and in varying degrees. The attack on working conditions, and therefore on the relative proportion of wages, appeared as the act of an individual corporation or plant boss. This led to the localization of consciousness. Furthermore, as technological advances have been shrouded in the garb of 'progress', and seen only as a matter of 'private initiative' by the individual firm, it did not bring the system or the state (the guaranteee of the system) into question. The economic attack on the working class living standards that has occurred since 1965, however, is national and simultaneous. It affects all sections of the working class and is integrally related to the functioning of the state and to the conscious political policy of those in power. The mysteries of corporate accounting give way to open political debate, as with the debate over ABM. In the realm of 'partisan politics', the distinctions in economic policy have faded

\* This percent does not include 'contributions to social insurance' which do not contribute to the defense budget.

to the point of disappearance. The commitment to Vietnam, to long term 'major hardware', to the 10% surcharge, and all the rest continues with full force under Nixon. In fact, if Nixon's speech at the Air Force Academy on June 4th meant anything, it meant a growing commitment to the military, i.e. to the Brass and the arms economy. In this context, the national, class nature of business decisions and the functions of the state become a more obvious, more centralized and political focus of discontent.

## THE ATTACK ON WORKING CLASS LIVING STANDARDS

In *Capital*, Vol. I, Marx reasoned that the value of labor power, and therefore the wages of the worker, was determined by the value of the goods and services necessary for the worker to actually perform his labor and to reproduce his own labor power and that of his children — the future generation of workers. Thus, at minimum, wages had to sustain the worker and his family at a level that would allow them to continue functioning as workers. Although this 'subsistence' level is historically and culturally conditioned, and generally rises over time, at any given point average annual wages must cover the minimum costs of living of workers in a given society.<sup>83</sup> Bourgeois, and even some radical economists have attacked this conception by pointing to the generally high standards of living of American workers as compared to those of the British working class of Marx's time. In doing so they have simply ignored the relative content of Marx's concept of subsistence. It is no concession for Marxist methodology for one to insist that 'subsistence' in America today is very different from that in 19th century England (we have already mentioned the rising costs of the reproduction of labor). In fact, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics periodically calculates family budgets for a minimum and moderate standard of living for urban wage and salary earners. For 1967, the BLS calculated the 'lower' budget for a family of four (US average) at \$5,915 and the 'moderate' budget at \$9,076. These average figures are slightly higher for most northern cities, except Detroit and Cleveland, and slightly lower in southern cities.<sup>84</sup> For the same year, assuming no unemployment, the average earnings of non-supervisory workers were \$5,295, not even at the minimum level. The manufacturing worker came closer with \$5,875, but the average wholesale and retail worker missed the mark entirely with \$4,271.<sup>85</sup> Of course, not all male workers have families of four, and within families of that size a fair number of women workers provide a second income. Even at that, a family of four with two working members is, at best, likely to have a total income around the 'moderate' budget level — particularly since women workers invariably receive lower than average wages. Even within the static picture drawn here, however, the reality is still grimmer. The wage figures are before taxes, the budget figures are after taxes. Since taxes run about 25% of incomes in this range, most workers make less than the 'modest' budget and many less than the 'lower' budget. Thus even under the best of circumstances, a static situation in which inflation is not operative, the living standards of the working class are hardly luxurious.

Within the working class, of course, there is a broad range of wage and salary levels. A Department of Labor survey of professional, technical and clerical salaries showed that in 1965 the majority of engineers made from \$9,000 to \$15,000, most draftsmen from \$6,800 to \$8,000, most chemists from \$7,600 to \$15,000. At the same time, most clerical workers, key punch operators, stenographers, typists, etc., made around \$4,000<sup>86</sup> (a fact which indicates the enormous disparity between male and female salaries, clerical jobs being 'women's' jobs and paying about \$1,800 below the average). In fact, the statistics already presented in Table IV indicate that a great many more workers receive wages around or less than the 'lower' budget figure of \$5,915, than near the 'modest' level.

What distinguishes the period from 1965 to the present, however, is not so much the level of income as the dynamic which threatens even that level. Since 1965 there has been a spiraling increase in consumer prices, as a result of the Vietnam War and the inherent contradictions of the arms economy. From 1960 to 1965, consumer prices rose 6.5%, while wages rose 17.7%. Thus there was still a significant, if not breathtaking, increase in real wages. From 1965 to 1968, however, prices rose by 10% while wages rose by 14.3%, only a slight increase in real wages.<sup>87</sup> Even this slight increase, however, has been wiped out by growing taxes — federal, state, and local.

One of the by-products of arms spending is an increase of state and local taxes. To be sure, federal taxes have risen somewhat (as with the 10% surcharge initiated by Johnson in 1968 and continued by Nixon in 1969), but the bulk of tax increases have occurred on the state and local level. In the past three or four years many state and most urban areas have instituted income, employment and sales taxes, all of which are taxes on the working class. These taxes have supplemented or even surpassed the traditional property taxes. A recent study by the Teamsters in New York showed that these tax increases, along with inflation, virtually wiped out all the gains made by workers in New York City from 1965 to 1968.<sup>88</sup>

The rate of wage and salary increases has risen in response to this situation — largely as a result of intensified struggle. The increase for union workers covered by major contracts (those covering more than 1000 workers) was 6% in 1968, as compared to 5.2% in 1967.<sup>89</sup> Similarly, professional, technical, and clerical salary increases amounted to 5½-7% in 1968 and 3½-4½% in 1967.<sup>90</sup> Even this increased rate of increase, however, has not produced an expanding living standard. Furthermore, there have been some setbacks in recent union contracts. For one thing, the cost-of-living escalator clauses won by some of the big industrial unions in the early 1950s have been abandoned or watered down. The mean increase of escalator clauses has dropped since the late 1950s, from 6.4 cents an hour in 1958 to 4.9 cents in 1968. It was even lower in the early 1960s, but now that inflation is rampant, it has not even risen to the level of the 1950s. The

steelworkers and railway unions dropped their cost of living clauses altogether between 1960 and 1962. By 1968, only one out of four workers was covered by any sort of cost of living clause.<sup>91</sup> What is more, the increase structure of most union contracts poses a real problem for workers. Under the long term contract, the bulk of the three year wage increase occurs in the first year, with progressively lower increases for the next two years.<sup>92</sup> This means that the union worker is powerless to combat inflation and tax increases in the last two years of the contract. At present, over 6 million workers, out of 9.3 million covered by major contracts, are tied to such 'deferred increases' until 1970 or 1971.<sup>93</sup> Obviously, non-union workers are in an even more precarious position since they have no way of guaranteeing any sort of increase.

The stagnation of income is only one of the effects of the permanent arms economy. As a result of scarce federal funds, along with the entire set of priorities inherent in capitalism, America's urban areas have become increasingly unliveable. Basic city services such as transit and sanitation have declined. In New York City, for example, a group of rank and file transit workers in 1967 documented the decline in subway services since the 1950s.<sup>94</sup> Also in New York City, the President of the Sanitationmen's Union showed, before the city council, how sanitation services had declined by 1967.<sup>95</sup> This decline in standard services is typical of the whole country. More in the public eye, however, is the growing threat to health and life posed by air and water pollution. There is hardly an urban area in which these problems have not reached the danger point. The price of housing increased by 10% from 1965 to 1968 as compared to about 5% from 1960 to 1965<sup>96</sup> — in fact, there has been a general housing crisis in most urban areas. The growth of slums and 'urban blight' in the past 20 years is well known. The entire decay of the cities and surrounding areas has become so blatant that it is now a central focus of liberal rhetoric. This decay has hit black and Spanish-speaking workers the hardest, but it has been a source in the decline of the living standards of all workers. No one who lives in an urban area, except the rich, has been able to escape the degrading effects of capitalist decay. Blacks and other third world workers, however, have been forced to accept the burden of this decay to a point that has become intolerable. The most recent 'solution' to urban problems, pushing workers and poor people out of the inner city and urban renewing it for the middle and upper classes, has only intensified overcrowding and slums. The center of most cities is filled with glittering commercial buildings while the slums become more concentrated and even the old, stable 'ethnic' neighborhoods are dragged into the vortex of decay.

This total attack on the living standards of the working class is national in scope and increasingly political in nature. Unlike the problems of the 1950s, which are still operative, those that have emerged in the second half of the 1960s affect all sections of the working class — even if in varying degrees. Furthermore, the rooting of the current instability in the permanent arms economy tends to expose the interpenetration of the state and the corporations, and to destroy the myth of government as an independent force. In 1967, Professor Galbraith, a good friend of capitalism, observed that 'no sharp line separates government from the private firm... Each organization is important to the other; members are intermingled in daily work; each organization comes to accept the other's goals; each adopts the goals of the other as its own. Each organization, accordingly, is an extension of the other.'<sup>97</sup> The traditional status of the American politician as a corrupt, but supposedly independent, 'professional', which served to disguise the class nature of the state, has faded and his role as corporate flunkie become more visible. The state, the national economy, and their interrelationship are part of the attack on living standards. These facts not only make the current crisis a national, class crisis, but tend to put the old issues associated with working conditions into their true, class context. Thus for the first time in years the possibility of a new level of class consciousness and activity has emerged. The objective basis for overcoming the fragmentation of class consciousness is being rapidly established by the system itself.

## BLACK WORKERS AND RACISM

No single fact of American social history has plagued and distorted the consciousness of the working class as much as racism. Though racism is probably as old as western (class) civilization, its virulent American form is rooted, above all, in the role forced on black labor by an almost exclusively white ruling class. Brought to north America as slaves, i.e. as the permanent private property of whites, black people were institutionally locked into the lowest section of the labor force even before there was anything like a national economy. As 'private property', black workers were necessarily viewed as inferior by whites from the beginning. While the scope of this paper precludes a full analysis of the relationship between the economic position of blacks and the development of racism, it is clear that racism is more than a set of attitudes. It is above all an institutional set-up dating from the earliest moment of American history. It is on the basis of these institutions that prejudice has rested and grown. The abolition of slavery merely changed the specific institutional form, not the basic relationship.

As competitors with white labor, black workers were forced into the lowest paying jobs and tied to the poverty of southern agriculture in the years from the end of the Civil War to the outbreak of World War I. The role of white labor unions, particularly the AFL, in accomplishing this end is well known and has been thoroughly documented.<sup>98</sup> With the growth of migration from the rural south during and after World War I, black workers began to enter industry, but only in the lowest jobs. Although many companies simply refused to hire black people at all, others, like Ford, made it a policy to fill their unskilled jobs with blacks.<sup>99</sup> The pattern of filling unskilled industrial and service jobs (usually in times of labor shortage) with blacks from the south was repeated during World War II, establishing the black labor force at the bottom of northern industry. When labor shortages become surpluses, blacks are dumped *en masse*. The two-to-one ratio of black to white unemployment has remained in force since the end of World War I. The decline of southern agriculture following World War II produced the last great migration to northern industrial centers. The fact that there was no real

labor shortage during the 1950s - there was rather growing unemployment - meant the establishment of a virtually permanent reserve army of black labor in the slums of industrial cities.<sup>100</sup> In general, the trade union movement has only added to the institutionalization of this position at the bottom of the working class (though not always as a matter of conscious policy). As mentioned, the AFL craft unions helped, consciously, to drive blacks out of skilled jobs - a practice still in force. The CIO did contribute to certain advances for black workers just before and during World War II, but with its ossification and its integration into the administration of industry through the contract, even the industrial unions have tended to keep black workers at the bottom of the job scale, largely through seniority provisions. It is significant, however, that the basis of the only period of advance for black workers was laid by a general upheaval of the working class and the growing militancy of blacks for their own demands - A. Phillip Randolph's threatened March on Washington in 1940 to win a strong FEPC Act. Prejudice did not disappear during the great strike movements of the late 1930s, but the edges of some of the institutional barriers to black workers were eroded for a few years.<sup>101</sup> Nonetheless, since the end of World War II, the position of blacks as the lowest paid and least skilled, and as a permanent reserve army of labor, has been firmly re-established.

By the 1960s, 70% of all employed black people were in unskilled and semi-skilled blue collar and service jobs.<sup>102</sup> In 1965, 67% of all black men were operatives, laborers or service workers; and 72% of black women were operatives or service workers, with another 13% in clerical jobs.<sup>103</sup> All of those jobs are among the lowest paying. This has meant that black workers generally earn only slightly more than half as much as white workers. The median income of 'nonwhites' has been a fairly stable 55% of that of whites since the mid-1950s. Even this abysmal figures, however, represents a decline from 1950, when it was 60%.<sup>104</sup> Thus even such gains as were made during the heydays of the CIO were mostly wiped out. The general two-to-one ratio of black to white unemployment (much higher for youth), the concentration of black women on welfare in urban areas, and even the decaying slums in which many black workers are forced to live, derive from the position of blacks at the bottom of the working class,\* and from the fact that in general there is no possibility of escape from this position.

Both the special oppression of black people and the tenacity of white racism flow from this 100-year old set-up, itself based on 300 years of slavery. For blacks this has meant that no matter how prosperous the period, they could expect very little advance in living standards. On the other hand, when prosperity fades or collapses, black workers feel the impact with at least twice the force felt by whites. At the same time, the racist attitudes of white workers has its base in this same two-to-one ratio that runs throughout black-white comparisons. The white worker earns roughly twice as much as his black counterpart and experiences half the incidence of unemployment. To a certain degree, the white worker's *relatively* better position is based on the special oppression of blacks. Given a certain amount of variable capital (wages) for the economy as a whole, the capitalist class can and does grant a relatively larger share to whites (particularly those who fight for wage increases through a union) at the expense of blacks. The attitudes of the white workers have little to do with this, since when they strike for higher wages they are not aware of where the money comes from. It is rather a mechanism based on the structural position of blacks vis-a-vis whites. At the same time, this fact provides the capitalists with a unique strategic tool. For even while allowing a relatively larger portion of wages to white workers, he can keep the total wage bill down by dividing and emasculating the struggle of the class as a whole. This strategy is as old as American capitalism. It was openly used in the past and more cleverly used right up to the present. In a more sophisticated way, this old strategy is used today by the politicians and the state. The notion spread by liberals defending their programs and conservatives attacking them that welfare programs are responsible for growing taxes, i.e. for the attack on working class living standards, is nothing but a new way of pushing the idea that white living standards depend on black poverty.

The institutionalized differential between black and white workers is the material source and sustenance of racism. The elimination of racism in the working class, therefore, is not simply a matter of destroying attitudes through moral persuasion.\*\* It must involve the destruction of their institutional basis. At the same time, however, the perception of the black-white differential as a matter of privilege is based on something of an optical illusion inherent in the institution and the fragmentation of class consciousness. The institution of special oppression is based on capital's attempts to lower the total wage bill of the working class - in the firm and in the economy as a whole. As we have seen, average wages tend to be around the subsistence (which does not mean starvation) level. In general, then, labor is paid at its value, in the Marxist sense. Black labor, however, is paid below its value, nearly 50% below. For the most part, therefore, it is not the white workers who gain from the oppression of blacks, but white capitalists. The oppression is racist, it is institutional, but it is structured so that the bulk of privilege accrues to those whites who control the means of production and surplus value.\*\*\*

\* Of course, the majority of workers in these low-paying positions are white - often southern whites who migrated north at the same time as the blacks. Nonetheless, while various white ethnic groups have risen to higher jobs, blacks have consistently remained at the bottom, and disproportionately so.

\*\* Even when this moral persuasion is garbed in revolutionary rhetoric, as with both PL and the National Collective tendency in SDS.

\*\*\* This fact, however, is by no means so simple a matter as multiplying the income difference between black and white workers by the number of black workers to obtain the amount of surplus value made on black oppression, as PL seems to think. This is not only a simplistic travesty on Marxist economics, but it ignores the fact that some of this surplus value does go to certain groups of whites, such as craft unionists, and to the black middle class.

The origins and the fundamental sustaining institutions of racism; relevant to today, lie in capitalist production, but this is not the end of the problem. As in other areas of social life, the racist institutions created in the structure of production throw up scores of ancillary institutions. Over the decades these institutions grow and expand and take on a life of their own. Thus racism and racist institutions reach into every aspect of American society. Furthermore, many racist institutions no longer bear any necessary relationship to their original purpose or function. Legislative segregation in the south, for example, which was born as a means of diverting populism and a militant labor force,<sup>105</sup> is no longer needed to sustain racism as the north demonstrates. In fact, the more sophisticated sections of southern business joined with the black middle class in the early 1960s to fight segregation, though not racism, in cities such as Atlanta.<sup>106</sup> Many more racist institutions, however, continue to function at full force and to affect all sections of society, including the working class. The craft unions, which continue to exclude blacks, for example, do maintain a privileged position within the working class by artificially restricting the number of skilled workers. Even within the industrial unions, seniority tends to act as a way of granting promotional privileges to white (and older) workers. Obviously, institutions of this sort must be opposed and destroyed. In general, racist institutions affect all classes and strata of black people. It is this fact that gives the struggle of black people a national (and nationalist) character. In this context, it is not at all surprising that the first section of the black community to rebel in our epoch was the most upwardly mobile strata, the black middle class. Their rebellion was against precisely those institutions that had become peripheral to production and yet obstructed the fulfillment of a real middle class life style. Because racism affects all groups of black people, including workers, all blacks could identify with the middle class Civil Rights movement of the early 1960s, even if they didn't participate in it.

It was in the wake of the growing movement of black people that black workers began to organize themselves as blacks. The first significant movement since World War II was the Negro American Labor Council, formed in late 1959. Unlike the Civil Rights organizations of the time, the NALC was a black organization. It was limited, however, by the fact that throughout its life it was dominated by union officials and staffers. Nonetheless, the NALC did have the effect of raising the awareness of black workers to the level of organized struggle. In the UAW, the Trade Union Leadership Council, an NALC affiliate, grew to nearly 8000 members and was actually able to defeat Reuther's candidate in the Democratic primary in 1962. Up to 1965, A. Phillip Randolph, NALC leader, engaged George Meany in a fight which brought the existence of racism in the unions to light.<sup>107</sup> After 1965, the NALC declined and eventually disappeared (Randolph, probably under the influence of Bayard Rustin, made his peace with Meany). Since that time, black caucuses of various sorts have arisen throughout industry and in most major unions where there are significant numbers of blacks. These caucuses range from rather opportunist groups oriented toward staff positions in the unions (such as Bobby Seale ran up against in the Concerned Transit Workers in Chicago in the summer of 1968) to explicitly revolutionary organizations such as those affiliated with the League of Revolutionary Black Workers in Detroit and the Black Panther caucus in Fremont, California (all of them in UAW shops). Simultaneously, there has been a rise in the general militancy of black workers. This is reflected in the strike and organizing movements among black sanitation, hospital, and other workers, beginning with the numerous 'holidays' taken by black workers after the death of Martin Luther King. The range of consciousness and politics within these new black workers' movements is great, most of them being neither opportunist nor explicitly revolutionary, but the overall tendency is clear. In general, this growing movement is both class and race conscious. It is part of the general rank and file revolt against deteriorating working conditions and income, as well as union bureaucratism. At the same time, the growing number of black caucuses and organizations are struggling against the special oppression of black workers.

The importance of this struggle, for black workers and for the long run struggle of the class as a whole, cannot be overestimated. Because of the importance of racism in American capitalism, there is a crucial dialectical relationship between the struggle of black workers and the struggle of the entire working class. For a hundred years the American ruling class has played black and white workers off against each other. Only during periods of extremely intense struggle has racism taken a backseat to class consciousness. Unified class struggle requires self-confidence by black workers, on the one hand, and respect for the power of black workers by white workers, on the other. It also requires a determination by both groups to win real gains. White workers, no less than blacks, initiate struggles as a matter of self-interest. The most conscious black workers' organizations have insisted on this and called on white workers to intensify their own struggles.<sup>109</sup> The United Black Brothers, who led the Mahwah wildcat in April 1969, for instance, made a direct appeal to white workers. They did this, furthermore, without abandoning their own struggles.\*<sup>110</sup> There is no doubt that at this point independent black struggles put most white workers up tight. There have been reactionary groups formed by whites in response to black actions, such as that formed at the Belvedere, Illinois Chrysler plant, where whites threatened a walkout in honor of Lurleen Wallace in response to a walkout by blacks in honor of King.<sup>111</sup> Nonetheless, in those instances where black workers have raised issues relating to all workers, as well as special demands for black workers, the response has been at least neutral. At Mahwah, some white workers did support and join the black workers' strike, and there are other instances of this. This is no concession to racism on the part of black workers. It is rather a strategy of struggle based on the recognition that on the one hand, black demands will become realizable only in the context of class struggle, and, on the other hand, that black initiative around a program that includes general class demands can spark such a struggle.

\*The United Black Brothers at Mahwah squarely rejected the suggestions of some SDS personalities that they call on white workers to reject their 'White skin privileges'.

For black workers to abandon their own particular demands, however, would only reinforce racism and the misperception that many white workers have of their own position (the 'optical illusion' already mentioned).

Thus the militancy and consciousness of black and white workers is interrelated. Class consciousness cannot fully develop until white workers, at least, respect the power of black workers, which requires independent struggle by blacks, and black workers cannot destroy their special oppression until the struggle of the class shakes the centers of power that bolster institutions of both racism and class domination. This relationship is no longer an impasse, but a process. The growing decay of American capitalism has broken the impasse and set the process in motion. The role of black workers in breaking this impasse is particularly important because, unlike most previous militancy, it is based on the national (and even international) racial and economic crisis rather than on local grievances alone.\*

## GROWING STRUGGLE: THE TRANSITION TO A NEW LEVEL OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The increased attack on the living standards of the entire working class has spurred a significant and growing intensification of the class struggle. By every measure (see Table VII) strikes have risen to massive proportions since 1965. Major national strikes in auto, copper, electrical, east coast longshore, communications (for the first time since 1947) and airlines were long and large. Furthermore, the past three years saw a rise in local and wildcat strikes. We have already mentioned the local auto strikes and the rise of 'interim' strikes in the electrical industry that followed the 1967 strike and settlement. The United Steelworkers settled in July 1968 without an industry-wide strike, but there were a number of local strikes.<sup>112</sup> In 1967, 60,000 coal miners struck without UMW authorization in five states,<sup>113</sup> and in the spring of 1969, 40,000 West Virginia miners launched a wildcat strike for stronger mine safety and health laws (the Black Lung strike).<sup>114</sup> Significant

Table VII: WORK STOPPAGES<sup>115</sup>

Year	Number of stoppages	Workers involved	Man-hours lost
1960	3,333	1,320,000	19,100,000
1961	3,367	1,450,000	16,300,000
1962	3,614	1,230,000	18,600,000
1963	3,362	941,000	16,100,000
1964	3,655	1,640,000	22,900,000
1965	3,963	1,550,000	23,300,000
1966	4,405	1,960,000	25,400,000
1967	4,595	2,870,000	42,100,000
1968	4,700	2,294,000	42,390,000

local and wildcat strikes also took place in oil, railroad, auto (in addition to those around the 1967 settlement), and public utilities.<sup>116</sup> In the same period, there was a nationwide upsurge in strikes by local and state public employees. Sanitation men in several cities, teachers across the nation (not including the UFT's action against black community control in 1968), welfare workers, transit workers, public hospital workers, and others have all had long and/or bitter strikes, in spite of laws prohibiting strikes by public employees. For the first time in thirty years, farm workers successfully organized a union and led a series of long strikes that are still going on. The California farm workers organized themselves; the AFL-CIO came late and reluctantly.

The rise in intensity of both official and wildcat strikes has been accompanied by certain changes in the style and scope of struggle, particularly with wildcats. Down through the Mansfield wildcat in 1967, most such strikes were strictly local, go-it-alone actions centered around local and particular manifestations of declining working conditions. Wildcat or local strikes at the time of contract expiration, of course, occurred simultaneously, but there was little or no conscious coordination by the locals, i.e. no sense of national or even regional solidarity beyond inactive sympathy. It was precisely this isolation that led to the defeat of the Mansfield strike. In this instance, Reuther was able to muster the support of over 600 local representatives at a special conference to vote against the Mansfield (Local 549) strike.<sup>117</sup> This local isolation is in sharp contrast to the struggles of the late 1930s. In industry after industry before 1936, workers begged the AFL to organize them into national unions — they had already organized themselves locally. When the CIO was finally formed to meet this national need, it grew rapidly because the feeling of national class solidarity was already present. In

\* It should be noted, although it is beyond the scope of this pamphlet, that black workers bring a degree of power to the black liberation movement not held by any other section of the black community. As blacks are a significant proportion of the work force in most heavy industry, they have the power, even on their own, to disrupt production. This fact has been discovered, more or less accidentally by various groups of black workers; in Detroit during the riots the auto plants were largely shut down, not because of the riot per se but because the work-force was not at work. Clearly, this power can be used in an organized fashion to wring concessions from the white ruling class.

those days, workers who were themselves engaged in struggle, with the threat of unemployment always present, freely contributed what they could to aid other strikers. This spirit of solidarity reached its height during the Flint (Mich.) Fischer Body sit-in strike in 1937, when thousands of workers from all over the mid-west poured into Flint to guarantee the victory of that struggle.<sup>118</sup> Local isolation is still strong, but there are indications that this is changing.

At a special bargaining convention of the UAW, in April 1967, shortly after the Mansfield strike, there were organized floor demonstrations demanding that the union handle working conditions in the national contract.<sup>119</sup> The pattern of isolation in wildcats has also been broken. In early 1969, the workers at the Sterling Heights Chrysler plant, which like Mansfield is a body-stamping plant, struck over a safety hazard. As with the Mansfield strike, the international union slapped a receivership on the Sterling local and closed down the union hall. This time, however, another UAW local came to the support of the strikers, renting a hall in which they could meet when they refused to obey the orders of 'Solidarity' House to return to work.<sup>120</sup> Similarly, when the workers in the Bethlehem Steel Railroad yards in South Buffalo struck, without union authorization, in March 1969, workers in the storage beds department walked-out in sympathy and many steel-workers, who are not even in the same union, began a slow-down.<sup>121</sup> The most dramatic examples of the growing potential of wildcats to spread, of course, are the coal miners strikes of 1967 and 1969. In both cases, local actions (in 1967 an organizing drive at Solar Fuel in southern Pennsylvania and in 1969 a wildcat over the Black Lung issue near Morgantown, W.V.) set tens of thousands of miners into motion. Most recently, a strike by brewery workers at a Florida Budweiser plant set off unofficial strikes up and down the east coast.<sup>122</sup>

There are also some indications of the decomposition of the apolitical consciousness of the past ten to fifteen years. For the first time in decades, groups of workers have shown a willingness to accept or even request the aid of radical students. The first, and best known, incident of this was the strike by Local 1-561 of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers at the Richmond, California Chevron works. The oil workers voted to accept student help and even to endorse the demands of the Third World Students at San Francisco State.<sup>123</sup> The Sterling, Buffalo and Mahwah wildcats, already mentioned, also accepted or requested student help. In the case of the Buffalo railroad wildcat, one of the leaders of the strike actually called the University of Buffalo and asked to speak to any radical student leader. The willingness of workers to accept student - i.e. radical - support doesn't mean that the workers accept the politics of the students. It does, however, point to a significant change in the attitudes of struggling workers toward alliances with other struggling groups. The West Virginia miners also accepted student help, both from SSOC and a general strike by the students at the University of West Virginia. This miners' strike is also important in that it is the first major political strike in our era. There have been strikes with political implications, but this is the first strike with explicitly political goals in years. Furthermore, this strike movement was initiated by the miners themselves (by Eliaja Wolford and other miners in the Morgantown area) and not by the largely middle class Black Lung Association.<sup>124</sup> This strike movement is particularly instructive because it flowed from a situation that, in its fundamentals, is common to most unionized industries. The miners turned to the political strike because the UMW, through its welfare fund, is tied into the mining business.<sup>125</sup> This in itself is rather unusual, but the acceptance of automation and deteriorating working conditions that flows from this fact is common to all large industrial unions. Pressed by intolerable conditions and unable to find redress through the union, the miners turned to their own self-activity and to political action. This struggle is far from over at the time of this writing, but there is good reason to believe that the miners will not give up the fight in spite of the coalition of the UMW, mine operators, and the state which is arrayed against them. There are a number of peculiarities in the mining industry, as there are in all industries, but it is, nonetheless, significant that such a strike movement should spring up now.

That workers are increasingly viewing their problems as political in nature was strongly indicated by the size of support received by George Wallace. The 'Wallace phenomenon' is a sign of the dangers of this period as well as its hopes. A number of radical writers have pointed out that Wallace support cannot be viewed *simply* as a matter of racist backlash among workers. In fact, the bulk of Wallace's support was not working class, but petty bourgeois and middle class. That working class support that Wallace did get, however, was largely concentrated in heavy industry. Roughly, it was of two types: those skilled workers from the traditional ethnic groups associated with auto and steel (Polish, Italian, etc.) who feel threatened primarily in terms of their communities, e.g. towns such as Dearborn, Michigan; and young white production workers, many of whom have been ardent rank and file rebels, largely from the south. Both groups have been hard hit by inflation and taxes. The young production workers have also experienced vicious speed-up in the past few years. Discussions with both types of workers by various union and radical organizers shows that, while for the skilled workers the 'law and order' element of Wallace's appeal was dominant, the young production workers viewed the Wallace movement as a rebellion against union and management. More than one young auto worker commented that if 'Reuther was for Wallace, we'd be for Humphrey'. In the past few years, young workers in auto, and other industries, have generally ignored politics altogether.<sup>126</sup> Wallace, as a volatile anti-establishment (though not anti-capitalist) crusader, appealed to their sense of rebellion. For both the older and younger (southern) workers, the racist form of rebellion was consistent with their cultural backgrounds (though in different ways). Thus, the legacy of the Wallace phenomenon is ambiguous. On the one hand, it was, at least for the volatile young workers, a form of political rebellion against the deteriorating conditions of their lives, in an election in which there was no other real alternative to Humphrey and Nixon. On the other hand, it represents the possibility that the growth of industrial militancy may assert itself, at least in some sections of the working class, on the basis of old (racist) cultural assumptions deeply rooted in American society. One hopeful sign that this alternative will not become dominant, is the difficulty that Wallace's A.I.P. has encountered in organizing a permanent

base in Detroit. Another is the fact that very few of the wildcat movements that have sprung up since Wallace have been marred by overt racism.

The problem of racism and the division of the working class that results from it is one of the most difficult ones facing the working class: It is clear that there are no pat 'techniques' or tactics at hand to solve the problem. Only the barest outlines of a strategy can be deduced from the history and present direction of working class struggle. In general, it is clear that black workers must be in a position to command the respect of white workers and, at the same time, that the class consciousness and activity of white workers must be at a relatively high level. Indeed, those instances in the history of the working class, and other oppressed classes, in which racism was subordinated, have been periods of intense class struggle — the Knights of Labor in the 1870s and 1880s, Populism, the IWW, and the CIO. Even the history of these movements would indicate, at least in a negative way, that self-confidence by black workers, itself a prerequisite of respect by white workers for the needs of black workers, requires some degree of independent black organization — autonomous but within the context of the struggle of the class as a whole. Nor is it possible or even desirable for black workers to kow-tow to the current level of consciousness of white workers. In the context of class struggle, groups within the class do not 'wait' for other groups to move; rather, they tend to pull these other groups into the struggle. Remember that the fights waged by the CIO workers brought forth an enormous upsurge among AFL workers, even though the AFL bureaucracy went to great lengths to convince their members that CIO efforts were a threat to them. At the same time, the growth of struggle among white workers means that they are feeling the pressures of capitalist decay and instability more strongly than in the past and are responding to attacks on their living standards. Periods of intense class struggle usually begin by actions directed at the defense or improvement of living standards. In the present situation this means a struggle against conditions at work as well as at home. The development of more radical forms of struggle depends on, and pre-exists in, this current 'economic' struggle. The primary task at this moment is to push and encourage this struggle in such a way that it further exposes the political and systematic roots of the attack on living standards. The demands of the state that workers make sacrifices for the sake of the economy and 'national interest' should be and for the most part have been met with a cold shrug of the shoulders, as the 10,000 workers at Bell Helicopter (producers of the 'Huey') have recently done.<sup>127</sup> Radicals can play an important role by exposing the class nature of such state demands. In short, for the struggle to develop and the consciousness of white workers to grow, white workers will have to struggle for their own immediate class interests, i.e. those which are common to all workers. The various 'radical' demands for sacrifices by white workers (or all workers), such as the demand that white workers renounce their consumer practices or their 'white skin privileges', are based on a total lack of understanding of the dynamics of class struggle. These demands, usually made by white student radicals and seldom, if ever, by black workers' groups, are based on an abstract moral approach to politics more akin to liberalism than Marxism. In the heat of class struggle, workers have proven themselves capable of enormous self-sacrifice and idealism (in the conventional sense of the word). In such a context black workers, by their own action, can smash racist barriers in oppressive institutions within the class as well as without, but this situation flows from the dynamics of struggle and not from abstract moralizing. It must be remembered that intense class struggle shakes loose the foundations of even the strongest institutions of oppression. It is for this reason that Marx spoke of the proletariat as the leader of all oppressed classes. The institutions of racism, oppression and co-optation that seem so immovable today can be severely weakened even before the struggle reaches revolutionary proportions. The working class, located in the central institution of society, production, is the only class that has the power to weaken and ultimately destroy these institutions. The struggle of black people is in a dynamic relationship with this overall struggle. Struggle in one's immediate self-interest, by both blacks and whites, is a necessary step in unfolding this dynamic. It is the step in which self-confidence and class identification develop. Insofar as racist attitudes are reinforced by insecurity, privatization, and fragmentation, this step is crucial to the destruction of racism within the working class. Insofar as white workers view blacks as an enemy because they are an easier target than the ruling class, black organization is a necessity, both to make blacks a less vulnerable 'enemy' and to expose management, the union bureaucracy, and the state as the real enemy.

As we have seen, the interpretation of the state and the corporation, and the contradictions exacerbated by the arms economy, in the form of taxes and inflation in particular, are simultaneously sparking new struggles and giving them a more national and political character. These phenomena tend to lead to still further attacks on the working class by the state, such as wage control (an idea already hinted at by Secretary of the Treasury David Kennedy) or, at the very least, increased Federal intervention in strikes. In short, the ruling class itself is exposing the class nature and national scope of its attack on living standards. At the same time, the nature of this attack means that it affects all sections of the working class simultaneously, though not to the same degree. This fact is an enormous counter pressure to the previous fragmentation of the working class. To one degree or another, all industrial, occupational and income groups (and the infinite mixture of these) are victims of a common attack by a common enemy. Thus, the basis for overcoming fragmentation has been laid.

It is clear, however, that not all groups within the class are affected to the same degree, or that all are equally capable of organization, previous traditions of struggle, concentration in the work place, etc., are all conditions which determine what sections of the class will move first. In general, the events from 1965 show that it has been the industrial proletariat, rather than white collar or service workers, who have moved first and with the greatest force. By all the criteria mentioned above, and for other reasons, industrial workers are better equipped to raise the level of struggle. As we showed earlier, industrial workers have been struggling consistently since 1955 (and to some degree have never ceased struggling). Unlike

any other section of the working class, the industrial proletariat is fairly well organized and has a long, and continuous, tradition of struggle. Many of the other groups and strata within the working class that were discussed earlier are either relatively new groups (having no tradition of struggle), or are not highly concentrated or organized in their place of work. Many of these conditions are reflections of the structural and strategic fact that mass production industry is still the heart of the capitalist system, and within industry the proletariat is still the heart of production.<sup>129</sup> The strategic position of the proletariat and the fact that it is this section of the class which is moving first points to its centrality in any overall strategy. Furthermore, this national-political attack on the workers occurs at a time when the struggle over working conditions is itself more intense. This is not merely a coincidence of issues, but a synthesis. The attempt to increase surplus value through inflation and taxes, or through wage restraints, puts the significance of deteriorating working conditions in their real context. The arguments, and the real reasons as well, used to justify price increases and taxes, are the same as, or closely related to, those used to impose speed-up or measured day work. The local appearance of working conditions fades as the attack becomes total. On the other side of the coin, the impulsion toward workers' control inherent in fights over working conditions takes on a more political and class character in the context of this overall attack. The necessity, and therefore the possibility, of a total program around which to fight, can transform the fight for better working conditions into the struggle for control over these conditions. Such a qualitative leap, however, is by no means automatic or 'inevitable'.

In the past ten or more years, the struggle over working conditions and the wildcat strikes have been led by informal shop floor groups with little or no official standing in the union. The basic problem with these groups has been their isolation. The only unifying factor has been the intention of these groups and their choice of enemies. Most of these struggles have been directed against the union bureaucracy and the contract as well as management. Within an industry with one union, this can be the basis of an industry-wide movement. Outside of auto, steel and rubber, however, this is not an adequate basis even for this. Furthermore, this phenomenon offers little hope at all for cutting across industry lines. The shop groups and their rebellion are, nonetheless, the basis for expanded struggle. A strategy that didn't begin at this point would be bypassing the real struggles of the working class. (Alvin Gouldner, in his book *Wildcat Strike*, quotes one corporate executive as saying that the workers seem to 'have a strong desire to run the plants'.<sup>130</sup>) The linking of these shop floor groups is possible on the basis of the programmatic synthesis of national economic issues and working conditions. This is to say, linkages require politics. In general alliances with other groups in industry, or the class, can be formed around such a program and the groups unified through a common struggle against the state as well as against management and the union bureaucracy. The Wallace campaign showed that an attack on the major bourgeois parties (those that administer the state) based on issues of real concern to workers can attract working class support. The West Virginia miners' strike showed that workers' self-activity directed at the state, the bosses, and the union leadership can do the same thing. Whether or not electoral action is used is a matter of tactics. The point is that the state is a focal point for struggle by groups of workers whose specific demands do not immediately appear related on the industrial level. The relationship, real enough in the economy, has to be made in a way that cuts across industrial and union (or non-union) lines, without shunting aside the specific demands. Political action, direct, industrial or electoral, offers a way to do this in the concrete realm of action.

It is clear, because of bureaucratism, the managerial nature of contract administration, and the web of state controls, that the unions cannot be the vehicle for this transitional development. Yet, it must be recognized that rank and file rebellion, while unable to gain direct sources of power, has had an effect on the unions. The bureaucratic monolith that was the AFL-CIO has been broken with the formation of the Alliance for Labor Action by the UAW and the Teamsters in July 1968.<sup>131</sup> While there is no reason to believe that these unions will change their internal practices significantly, or abandon their commitments to the Democratic Party and liberal politics, the mere fact of a break of this sort changes the political atmosphere and legitimizes new kinds of movements. In some cases, rank and file militancy has actually won some concessions within the unions. The most notable recent rank and file victory was the withdrawal of the United Steelworkers from the industry's 'Human Relations Committee', the joint labor-management committee through which the way for automation was paved. The unions and their leaders are bound to change to some extent, if only as a way of attempting to co-opt rank and file rebellion. Yet, it seems unlikely the structure of most unions or the interrelationship with management and the state can be sufficiently modified to actually transform the unions into adequate forms of struggle. At the same time, the union is a natural focus for political action within the industry. Political campaigns within the union can be, in some circumstances, a means for politicizing shop struggles. In this context, and unlike most union election campaigns in the past, the union becomes more an arena for action than the goal of the campaign. Clearly, however, the emerging movement, and the political movement that has the potential to emerge, is distinct from the union, a synthesis of shop-economic and political organization and struggle.

Capitalism's instability and growing crisis affects every aspect of life. Beginning with students and black people, the decay of American society pulls one section of society after another into turmoil. Just as the industrial proletariat has begun to intensify, and in some cases deepen, its struggle, so in coming years other sections of the working class can be drawn into the struggle. As new sections of the class enter the struggle, e.g. the unorganized, the struggle may be transformed or pushed to a new level. Similarly, what is now primarily an economic struggle may turn into a political struggle tomorrow, as with the miners' strike. Rosa Luxemburg observed that there is a dynamic interrelationship between economic and political struggle. Commenting on the events leading up to the Russian upheaval of 1905, she said:

In a word, the economic struggle is the factor that advances the movement from one political focal point to another. The political struggle periodically fertilizes the ground for the economic struggle. Cause and effect interchange every second. Thus, we find that the two elements, the economic and political, do not incline to separate themselves from one another during the period of the mass strikes in Russia; not to speak of negating one another...<sup>132</sup>

The economic struggle of American workers has, indeed, advanced to a new political focal point. What remains is for the economic struggle to become explicitly political. Rosa Luxemburg also commented on the prerequisites for mass political action:

In order that the working class may participate *en masse* in any direct political action, it must first organize itself, which above all means that it must obliterate the boundaries between factories and workshops, mines and foundations, it must overcome the split between workshops which the daily yoke of capitalism condemns it to.<sup>133</sup>

In the United States, with its lack of working class political traditions, the elimination of such boundaries may require political action in the first instance. Whether it is through political action or through the unification of strike movements, the strategy of alliances within the class must be pushed to its utmost.

The vehicle for unity in struggle is program. A program that can really accomplish such an ambitious task, must speak to the real needs of the working class as they see these issues. Insofar as the radical movement can contribute to the development of such a program, and that is surely its main task at this point, it must avoid the most ancient pitfall of the left, the inability to provide a transition from the reformist demands of workers today to revolutionary program and organization. The dilemma was clearest with the pre-WWI Social Democracy, which presented itself as a revolutionary movement. There was a minimum (reformist) and a maximum (revolutionary) program. The minimum program was the one upon which action was based, the maximum being the program that was articulated at May Day celebrations. In a period when revolution is not imminent, but in which growing class action is possible, revolutionary rhetoric counts for nothing, while reformist practice serves as a roadblock. To go from a period of economic activity to one of revolutionary consciousness, a transitional program is needed. In Trotsky's words, a transitional program is a 'bridge' which should lead 'from today's consciousness of wide layers of the working class... to one final conclusion: the conquest of power by the proletariat.'<sup>134</sup> Today we are at the reformist end of this bridge. The barriers in consciousness and in the system are massive. Nonetheless, the beginnings have been made, by the system, on the one hand, and the working class, on the other. Revolutionary struggle does not emerge instantaneously. Even the French mass strike of May 1968 was preceded by more than two years of intense economic strike activity.<sup>135</sup> Transitional demands, such as those relating to taxes, inflation and workers' control of production standards, which expose the nature of the crisis, must be counterposed to reformist demands or programs (Edward Kennedy and the 'left wing' of the Democratic Party) or demagoguery (Wallace and racism combined with pseudo-independent political action). If they are not, the ever-present trap of the Democratic Party, or an aggressive racist alternative, will deflect the struggle as it has in the past. Every rank and file struggle of large proportions comes under pressures from the ruling class. The West Virginia miners are being heavily courted by various liberal politicians, or liberals with political ambitions. In such a situation revolutionary rhetoric is no counterbalance.

The development of a revolutionary movement of the working class is a long and difficult task. The new generation of workers who are entering the shops now may prove to be the spark that makes such a movement a reality. This is not a question of any particular life style, but rather of the fact that youth is generally the first section of any class to interpret the experience of the entire class in a new way. Already being reached, to some extent, by the radical movement in the high schools, community colleges, armed forces, etc., this coming generation of workers can translate the radical ideas it is being exposed to into a program and struggle in the shops and in the society as a whole. The effect of these radicalized young workers on the rest of the class depends on the extent to which they are reached by today's (largely middle class) movement and by the reality and quality of the ideas and analysis with which they are reached. Virtually all sections of the radical movement have made a rhetorical commitment to the working class. The crucial task for radicals and revolutionaries, now, is to translate that rhetoric into concrete analysis, program and action that speaks to the real needs of the working class.

#### FOOTNOTES

1. "Monthly Labor Review" (MLR), April 1969, p. 98. The figure is total labor force minus 'managers, officials, etc.', and part of 'professionals, etc.' and 'farmworkers'. The figure is very approximate.

2. "Economic Notes" (Labor Research Associates)

3. Compiled from "Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1957" (US Bureau of the Census, 1960), p. 74; "Statistical Abstract of the US, 1968" (US Dept. of Commerce, 1968), p. 225; "Monthly Labor Review", April 1969 (B.L.S., US Dept. of Labor), p. 98.

4. "Manpower Report of the President" (MRP), 1969 (US Dept. of Labor, 1969), p. 29 and 33.

5. Percent calculated from "Economic Report of the President" (ERP), January 1969 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1969), p. 233

6. Percent calculated from ERP, 1969, p. 258; MRP, 1969, p. 29.

7. Joel Stein, 'United States Perspectives: Locating the American Crisis' (mimeo; IS, 1969), p. 7

8. Calculated from ERP, 1969, pp. 258, 270; MRP, 1969, p. 29.

9. "Handbook of Labor Statistics" (HLS), 1968 (BLS, US Dept. of Labor, 1968), p. 122.

10. Martin Perline and Kurtis Tull, 'Automation: Its Impact on Organized Labor', "Personnel Journal", May 1969, p. 340.

11. For a solid study that describes these studies, see Paul Sultan and Paul Prasow, 'The Skill Impact of Automation' in Richard A. Lester, ed., "Labor: Readings on Major Issues" (New York, Random House, 1965), pp. 345-364.

12. Perline & Tull, op. cit., p. 340.

13. Harry Greenspan and Edith Adreno, 'Engineers and Scientists in Private Industry', MLR, May 1968, p. 44.

14. Ibid, p. 44.
15. Ibid, p. 44; 'Research Summaries', MLR, March 1969, p. 70.
16. "Statistical Abstract of the US, 1967" (US Bureau of Census, 1967), p. 230.
17. 'Research Summaries', MLR, January 1969, p. 68.
18. See the discussions of professional workers in chapter 9 of Patrick Seal and Maureen McConville, "Red Flag, Black Flag" (New York, Ballantine Books, 1968), pp. 131-145.
19. Benjamin Solomon and Robert K. Burns, 'Unionization of White Collar Employees', "Labor: Readings in Major Issues", p. 152-53.
20. Calculated from Table I.
21. "Statistical Abstract, 1967", p. 299.
22. Solomon & Burns, loc. cit., pp. 144-145.
23. Sultan & Prasow, loc. cit., p. 357.
24. See Table I; MRP, 1969, p. 28; ERP, 1969, p. 258. ('Sales' is an occupational category, whereas 'Trade', including wholesale and retail, refers to employment by industry.)
25. "Statistical Abstract, 1967", p. 224.
26. Calculated as estimated from 'Retail Trade Summary Statistics', in "Census of Business", 1963.
27. MLR, April 1969, p. 107.
28. "Statistical Abstract, 1967", p. 228.
29. MRP, 1969, p. 29; ERP, p. 258; also Table I.
30. See Table I.
31. H.M. Douty, 'Prospects for White Collar Unionism', MLR, January 1969, p. 33.
32. See figures in "Statistical Abstract", 1967, Table 161, p. 117; Table 184, p. 131; Table 195, p. 138, among others. (Space prevents a full discussion of the role of education in relation here.)
33. Estimated from "Statistical Abstract, 1967", p. 439.
34. "Encyclopedia of Social Work", 15th issue (New York, NASW, 1965), pp. 532-35.
35. MLR, April 1969, p. 70
36. Robert E. Oshory and Walter E. Oherer, "Teachers, School Boards and Collective Bargaining" (Ithaca, NY State School of Industrial and Labor Relations, 1967), p. 8.
37. Ibid, pp. 15, 20.
38. New York Times World Economic Review and Forecast, 1968" (Princeton, D. Van Nostrand Co., 1968), p. 79.
39. Basic figures from ERP, 1969, p. 258; MRP, 1968, p. 29. Figures are adjusted by subtracting 15% for managers and supervisors (figured from occupational data) from all categories, managerial engineers, etc., from manufacturing, police from government. Although somewhat crude, these adjustments bring figures closer to real working class content of 'Labor Force'. Wages from MLR, April 1969, p. 107; service and transportation wages are for January 1969 from "Employment and Earnings" (Dept. of Labor, March 1969), pp. 95-96.
40. 'Research Summaries', MLR, January 1969, p. 68.
41. Everett Kassalow, 'Canadian and US White Collar Union Increases', MLR, July 1968, p. 43.
42. Douty, MLR, January 1969, p. 33.
43. Calculated from figures in "Statistical Abstract, 1967", pp. 224, 248.
44. Comparison of figures in MLR, January 1969, p. 68; Barbara Toth, 'Labor in a Year of Expansion', MLR, January 1969, pp. 18-19; and Mary Sproul, 'A Report on Salary Changes for Teachers in Urban Areas', MLR, April 1969, p. 49. 45. ERP, 1969, p. 270.
46. ERP, 1969, p. 279; MLR, April 1969, p. 107.
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49. Preis, op. cit., p. 420.
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65. See various issues of "New Politics" and "Union Democracy in Action" since 1965.
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67. Ibid, p. 60-62; Weir, "New Era...", p. 3.
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72. "Statistical Abstract, 1967", p. 322.
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90. MLR, January 1969, p. 68.
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93. Ibid.
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104. 'The Negroes in the United States: Their Economic and Social Situation' (US Dept. of Labor, Bulletin No. 1511); Rosen, op. cit., pp. 200-201; Peck, op. cit., pp. 218-219.
105. See C. Vann Woodward, "Origins of the New South", *passim*; and his "Strange Career of Jim Crow" (New York, Oxford U Press), *passim*.
106. See Sy Landy, 'Black Power', IS, 1967.
107. Thomas Brooks, op. cit., pp. 246-248; Mike Shute, 'The Negro and the UAW' (mimeo), YPSL, 1963.
108. A detailed report on this strike can be found in 'In Memphis: More Than a Garbage Strike', March 1968 and 'In Memphis: Tragedy Unaverted', April 1968, both from Southern Regional Council.
109. 'Guardian'.
110. Taken from reports by a number of different observers, and from a leaflet put out by the UBB and reprinted in "ISCA Reports", May 1969.
111. Weir, unpublished report, May 1969.
112. Toth, MLR, January 1969, pp. 13-15.
113. "The New Rank and Filer", March 1968 (Detroit).
114. "The Miner's Voice", May 4, 1969 (Morgantown; W.V.)
116. See "Wildcat Report" (New York), March 1969, and "Wildcat" (Chicago), May 1969.
117. Moody, "I.S.", no. 2, March-April 1967.
118. See Howe and Widick, op. cit., 55-63.
119. Weir, unpublished report, May 1969.
120. Report from a student supporter of the Sterling strike.
121. Gay Semel, 'Buffalo: Strike Against Steel', "Independent Socialist", No. 10, May 1969.
122. Verbal report from Dennis Sinclair.
123. Kit Lyons, 'Under the Standard Sign', "Independent Socialist", No. 8, March 1969.
124. From an interview with Eliaja Wolford by Joe Weiner and Bill Gerchow in May 1969.
125. "Miner's Voice", May 4, 1969.
126. Most of this is from verbal reports by people in the UAW in Detroit. See also Jim Jacobs and Larry Laskowski, 'The New Rebels in Industrial America', "Leviathan", No. 1, March 1969, p. 5.
127. New York Post, June 9, 1969.
128. For the latest development in this process, whereby the government buys the stock and bond holdings of multimillionaires so they can enter the government with no 'conflict of interest' (unbelievable), see New York Times, June 9, 1969.
129. The 'new working class' view that the organic composition of capital will be so high that the industrial proletariat will be an insignificant point is based on the projection of a predominantly automated economy in which technical white collar employees become the central labor force. Aside from the fact that this is somewhat of a fantasy, there are a number of economic and structural problems with the analysis underlying it; among them being: how could such an economy absorb the massive number of goods it would produce and still keep its wage bill insignificant; how does such an economy employ its superfluous population without severely cutting into surplus value and the profit rate.
130. Quoted in Bruce Levine, 'The Sterling Wildcat', "Independent Socialist", May 1969.
131. See Toth, MLR, January 1969, p. 12.
132. Quoted in Tony Cliff, "Rosa Luxemburg" (London, Socialist Review Publishing Co., 1959, p. 31 (available from IS).
133. Ibid, p. 30.
134. Trotsky, 'The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International', Pioneer Publishers, 1964, p. 9.
135. Tony Cliff and Ian Birchall, 'France: The Struggle Goes On', (London, Socialist Review Publishing Co., 1968), pp. 22-27.

published by: International Socialists  
874 Broadway  
New York, N.Y. 10003

also published by: New England Free Press  
791 Tremont St.  
Boston, Mass. 02118